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New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/59/295)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.18)

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to introduce the report of the Agency for the year 2003.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency: Every year brings new challenges and opportunities, and the past 12 months at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been no exception. The outlook for nuclear power is evolving, with increasing attention to its benefits as an environmentally clean source of electricity, but with concerns remaining related to waste disposal, safety and security. Nuclear applications in human health, agriculture and other fields are increasingly contributing to global sustainable development initiatives and the Agency has redoubled its efforts to support those initiatives by improving the efficiency and extending the reach of its Technical Cooperation Programme. Global cooperation in matters of safety and security has resulted in sustained improvements overall, but there is still much to be done. In the area of verification, the Agency's activities remain at the centre of efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and we have continued to prove our ability to implement objective and credible safeguards, but the international community still faces a number of difficult challenges and has intensified its focus on how to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Today, I welcome this opportunity to review with you some of the Agency's work in each of these areas.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of civilian nuclear power. With 439 nuclear reactors worldwide, nuclear energy continues to account for about 16 per cent of the world's electricity production, keeping pace with the steady growth in the global electricity market.

Near-term growth in nuclear capacity remains centred in Asia and Eastern Europe owing to a combination of factors, including the rise in demand for electricity, the existence of a well developed industrial infrastructure in those regions and the lack of indigenous alternatives in some countries.

Over the longer term, it is clear that the need for sustained human development will require a substantial investment in energy generation in the coming decades. Given its capacity for emissions-free electricity generation, nuclear energy has strong potential as a reliable baseline energy source. However, the degree to which nuclear energy is used will be shaped by the way a given nation balances the risks associated with a nuclear accident against other risks — such as air

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pollution or energy dependence. Clearly, not every country shares the view that improvements in the cost-effectiveness and safety performance of nuclear power warrant its revival. Those are matters of complexity and legitimate debate and IAEA will continue its efforts to provide comprehensible, accurate information to ensure that the benefits and risks of nuclear technology are clearly and fairly understood.

IAEA also continues to encourage and stimulate technological innovation related to power reactors, research reactors and other parts of the nuclear fuel cycle, in order to address concerns related to safety, proliferation and waste disposal. More than 20 IAEA member States are currently involved in projects related to new reactor and fuel cycle designs.

Regarding the long-term management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, progress continues to be slow, but steady. More than 50 countries now have spent nuclear fuel, including fuel from research reactors, stored in temporary sites awaiting disposal or reprocessing. At the Stockholm International Conference on Geological Repositories held in December 2003, experts agreed that the majority of technological issues have been satisfactorily addressed, but that social issues — such as public acceptance and political endorsement — are still problematic. IAEA has been assisting many of its member States in developing nuclear waste management and disposal strategies and I am pleased to report a renewed interest in multinational approaches to spent fuel management and disposal.

A major part of the IAEA's scientific and technical work involves the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology in a variety of fields. Many of those applications are proving important tools for social and economic development. An excellent example is the application of nuclear technology to one of the basic elements in human survival: the food supply chain. Over the past four decades, the use of isotopes and radiation in food and agricultural research and development has yielded rich results: there are now millions of hectares of higher-yielding crops all over the world; disease-resistant plants, developed with radiation-induced mutation, provide economic benefits worth billions of dollars every year to the world's farmers; improvements in livestock production and health have been realized; and the control and eradication of many insect pests has been made possible through radiation sterilization techniques.

Another crucial factor in development is access to safe drinking water — a basic necessity unavailable to more than one sixth of the world's population. Isotope hydrology is being used in a broad variety of IAEA projects to map underground aquifers, detect and control pollution and monitor the safety of dams.

Another key area of IAEA work relates to human health, including our efforts to combat the growing cancer threat in the developing world. Of the estimated 260 million new cancer cases expected in the next 20 years, approximately 175 million will require radiation therapy, and 100 million of those will be in developing countries that have neither the resources nor the expertise to deal with that impending crisis. The Agency has been working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners to provide the training, expert missions and equipment needed to support national and regional cancer therapy programmes. But the size of the problem far outstrips our resources, and we have launched the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) to attract additional funding and resources from both governmental and non-governmental sources.

The IAEA's technical cooperation programme provides roughly $80 million of assistance per year in these and other fields and is a principal mechanism for implementing the Agency's basic mission: "Atoms for Peace". As more developing countries become member States, the number of countries that benefit from assistance under the technical cooperation programme continues to grow. This year, we have an all time high of 111 member States participating in national, regional and interregional projects. To ensure the effectiveness of technical cooperation strategies, the IAEA secretariat develops thematic plans to highlight nuclear technology benefits in key areas, assists States in developing individually tailored country programme frameworks and ensures strong government commitment to technical cooperation projects before they are launched. And we continue to build and expand partnerships with other international organizations and development partners, in some cases drawing on their technical expertise to enhance the impact of a nuclear technique.

The safety and security of nuclear activities around the globe remain key elements of the Agency's mandate. Nearly two decades after the Chernobyl accident, it is gratifying to see that the Agency's efforts have been of tangible and sustained benefit, including:

our emphasis on defence in depth, risk management and international cooperation; our concerted drive to upgrade facilities with older design features; our assistance to developing member States in establishing a solid radiation protection infrastructure; our emphasis on safety and security in transport; and, particularly in recent years, our dual focus on strengthening physical protection at nuclear facilities and enhancing the security of nuclear material and radioactive sources worldwide. Considerable progress has been achieved through those efforts. Nevertheless, the need to maintain an effective and transparent global nuclear safety and security regime remains a matter of high priority.

The development and adoption of legally binding international agreements has proven to be a powerful mechanism for enhancing safety worldwide. Since the Chernobyl accident, four safety-related conventions have been concluded under the IAEA's auspices. The so-called early notification and assistance conventions serve to enhance international preparedness for, and response to, nuclear and radiological emergencies. The Convention on Nuclear Safety commits States parties to operate their nuclear power plants in accordance with international benchmarks designed to maintain a high level of safety. And the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management seeks to ensure that spent fuel and radioactive waste is managed and disposed of in a manner that will protect people and the environment from radiological and other hazards. However, many States are not yet party to these conventions, and certain key areas of the nuclear fuel cycle are still not subject to conventions.

The process towards strengthening the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) has made some progress. In July, at the request of the Government of Austria and 24 co-sponsoring States, I circulated proposed amendments to the CPPNM to all States parties. The aim of those amendments, as proposed, is to extend the scope of the Convention to cover nuclear material used for peaceful purposes, not only in international transport and storage but also in domestic transport, storage and use, as well as protection against sabotage of nuclear material and facilities used for peaceful purposes. While consultations are ongoing to resolve a few outstanding issues, it is my hope that we can convene a diplomatic conference early next year to amend the Convention and expand its scope. This is an important part of our efforts to enhance protection against nuclear and radiological terrorism.

The Agency promotes the acceptance of the entire corpus of IAEA safety standards as the global reference for protecting people and the environment against nuclear accidents and the harmful effects attributed to radiation exposure. We are making good progress on the revision of those standards and on filling in the remaining gaps in coverage. The establishment of regional safety networks — such as the Asian Nuclear Safety Network and the Ibero-American Radiation Safety Network — will also promote the use of international safety standards and the sharing of expertise on a more regional basis.

The IAEA's safety review and appraisal services assist member States in the application of Agency safety standards and provide useful feedback on their effectiveness. While those services originated predominantly in the field of nuclear installation safety, they now extend to cover many areas of radiation, radioactive waste and transport safety as well. We are still assisting some member States with safety upgrades at older installations with design vulnerabilities. As more member States consider the extension of licences for nuclear power reactors, we are also giving increased attention to services that can identify and address equipment ageing and relevant operational issues. And as we work towards the global acceptance of IAEA safety standards, safety reviews will be integrated into fewer categories and focused increasingly on the review of national self-assessments.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the IAEA moved swiftly to conduct a thorough review of its existing programmes related to preventing acts of nuclear and radiological terrorism. The Agency has sought to develop a comprehensive plan for upgrading nuclear security worldwide. Our work since that time has been focused on measures to guard against thefts of nuclear and radioactive material and to protect related facilities against malicious acts.

Agency efforts to help member States improve their protection against nuclear and radiological terrorism are continuing at an exceptionally fast pace on multiple fronts. In a relatively short span, much work has been completed on assessing the security needs of member States and providing necessary training. For example, since September 2001, working

in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa, we have conducted more than 50 advisory and evaluation missions and convened more than 60 training courses, workshops and seminars. The IAEA also has strengthened its cooperation on nuclear security issues with other international organizations, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, Interpol, Europol, the Universal Postal Union and the World Customs Organization, as well as the European Commission.

We have made significant progress in many aspects of nuclear security, but much remains to be done. While significant work remains on the development of international legal instruments, as well as relevant guidelines and recommendations, the greatest emphasis is now being placed on addressing equipment needs and other tangible improvements and on helping States take the steps needed to make their nuclear security programmes sustainable and self-reliant.

The IAEA has also been assisting member States in ensuring that their radioactive sources are safe and are either secured within their own countries or shipped back to suppliers. Information in the Agency database on illicit trafficking makes it clear that a market continues to exist for obtaining and using radioactive sources for malicious purposes. We have been working with many countries to identify and secure sources that are the most vulnerable and at the highest risk. Those assistance efforts have been given high priority, and we expect the volume of those efforts to increase.

The verification challenges that the Agency has faced in the past year further underscore the importance of the Agency's role in combating nuclear proliferation and the urgency of providing the Agency with all the necessary means to perform its verification responsibilities in an effective and credible manner.

The IAEA's verification activities are designed to provide assurance that nuclear material and facilities are used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In the early 1990s, after the discovery of the clandestine nuclear-weapon programme in Iraq, the international community committed itself to providing the Agency with the authority to strengthen its verification capability, using a mechanism referred to as the additional protocol to provide assurance not only that declared nuclear material has not been diverted for non-peaceful purposes, but equally important, that no undeclared nuclear material or activities exist.

Since my report last year, the number of States with additional protocols in force has increased appreciably, from 36 to 60. This broader authority, however, is still far from universal. One hundred thirty-three States remain without an additional protocol in force, and 42 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons still have not even fulfilled their article-III obligation to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. I strongly urge all States that have not done so to conclude and bring into force the required safeguards agreements and additional protocols at an early date.

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to pose a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Since December 2002, the Agency has not performed any verification activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and cannot therefore provide any level of assurance about the non-diversion of nuclear material. We have continued to emphasize the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Korean crisis through dialogue that addresses all the underlying issues, and it is my hope that the six-party talks will lead to such a settlement. I trust that any future settlement will ensure, inter alia, the return of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and that the Agency will be given the necessary authority and resources to be able to fulfil its verification responsibilities in a credible manner.

The Agency's verification activities in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya over the course of this year have confirmed that, for many years, the country pursued an undeclared nuclear programme which aimed at enriching uranium and which included the receipt of nuclear weapons design documents. Over many years, Libya failed to meet many of its obligations under its safeguards agreement. However, last December, Libya renounced its programmes for nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, Libya has signed and implemented an additional protocol and has actively cooperated with the IAEA's efforts to verify its renunciation of its former nuclear-weapon programme. Our assessment to date is that Libya's declarations of its past nuclear related activities appear to be consistent with the information

available to, and verified by, the Agency. Further investigation is still needed, however, in order for the Agency to verify the completeness and correctness of Libya's declarations of its nuclear activities. We will continue to pursue those questions as part of our routine inspection activities in Libya.

The IAEA has continued to devote considerable attention to the implementation of safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the IAEA Board of Governors has adopted several resolutions relevant to Iran's former undeclared nuclear programme and its failure, over an extended period of time, to meet many of its obligations under its safeguard agreement. The Board has urged Iran, inter alia, to cooperate fully with the Agency in the verification process. Since February 2003, when the IAEA started its verification of Iran's undeclared programme, the Agency has made steady progress in understanding its nature and extent. Last December, Iran signed an additional protocol and has been acting as if the protocol were in force, pending its ratification. Iran's earlier interactions with the Agency were regrettably marked by the provision of information that was at times changing, contradictory and slow in coming, a situation that led to repeated expressions of concern by the Board. Iran's cooperation since that time, however, has improved appreciably. IAEA inspectors have been provided access to requested locations, and Iran has provided information requested by the Agency — although in some cases Iran's response has continued to be slow.

As a result of the Agency's investigations, some issues have reached the point where any further follow-up needed will be carried out as part of routine safeguards implementation. One issue remains central to understanding Iran's nuclear programme, namely, the extent and nature of its uranium enrichment activities. Additional investigation is still ongoing, and I expect to be able to provide a comprehensive report on progress to the IAEA Board of Governors later this month.

As of November of last year, the Board of Governors has also asked the Agency to monitor Iran's voluntary suspension of enrichment related and reprocessing activities. However, Iran has reversed some of the suspension measures initially undertaken in November 2003, and the Board has called on Iran to again suspend all enrichment related and reprocessing activities as a confidence-building measure. I have continued to stress to Iran that, in light of serious international concerns surrounding its nuclear programme, it should do its utmost to build confidence through these voluntary measures. I have also asked Iran to pursue a policy of maximum transparency, so that we can bring the outstanding issues to resolution and, over time, provide the required assurance to the international community. This is clearly in the interest of both Iran and the international community and should lead to a dialogue among all interested parties with a view to reaching a comprehensive settlement of all the underlying issues.

The IAEA's mandate in Iraq under various Security Council resolutions still remains in effect. As I reported to the Assembly last year, at the time the Agency was asked to cease its Security Council verification activities in Iraq in March 2003, we had found no evidence of the revival of nuclear activities prohibited under relevant Security Council resolutions. Naturally, the international community is reassured that these findings have since been validated. Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), inter alia, reaffirmed the intention of the Council to revisit the mandate of the Agency in Iraq. I hope that the Council will soon provide guidance on the future of that mandate. It is clearly important to bring the whole question of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to closure as early as possible and for the Agency to resume the necessary verification and monitoring activities in Iraq as soon as the security situation permits, particularly in view of the dual-use items that have been under IAEA custody in Iraq that would be susceptible to misuse.

Pursuant to the mandate given to me by the IAEA General Conference, I have continued my consultations with the States of the Middle East region on the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East and on the development of model agreements. Once again, I regret to report that I have not been in a position to make progress on those fronts.

The General Conference has also asked me to organize a forum on the relevance of the experience of other regions with existing nuclear-weapon-free zones — including confidence-building and verification measures — for establishing such a zone in the region of the Middle East. Based on my consultations with States of the region, including during my recent visit to Israel, I intend to organize such a forum early next year, and further consultations are in progress towards that end. I earnestly hope for

this forum to be the beginning of a much-needed dialogue among States of the region on a security structure that would undergird efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement in the region.

The recent experience of the IAEA in verifying undeclared nuclear programmes has yielded a number of important lessons that are worth noting in this context. Perhaps the most important lesson is that verification and diplomacy, used in conjunction, can be effective. When inspections are accompanied by adequate authority, aided by all available information, backed by a credible compliance mechanism and supported by international consensus, the system works. The Iraq experience demonstrated that inspections — while requiring time and patience — can be effective, even when the country under inspection is providing less than active cooperation.

Perhaps the most disturbing lesson to emerge from our work in Iran and Libya, however, is the existence of an extensive illicit market for the supply of nuclear items, which clearly thrived on demand. The relative ease with which a multinational illicit network could be set up and operated demonstrates clearly the inadequacy of the present export control system, which relies on informal arrangements that are not only non-binding, but also do not include many countries with growing industrial capacity and do not provide for any systematic sharing of information with the IAEA.

A related lesson involves the accessibility of nuclear technology. The technical barriers to mastering the essential steps of uranium enrichment and, for that matter, to designing weapons, have eroded over time, which inevitably leads to the conclusion that the control of technology, in and of itself, is not a sufficient barrier against further proliferation. This also leads to the important conclusion that ways and means should be found to better control the sensitive parts of the fuel cycle — namely, the production of enriched uranium and the reprocessing of plutonium.

The concept of multilateral control or oversight over proliferation-sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle has been the subject of many studies and initiatives over the years. Recent non-proliferation and security challenges make it important and appropriate, however, that we revisit this subject. Several months ago, I appointed a group of senior experts to look into various options for multilateral control. The group plans to submit a report next March on the results of its study.

In addition to the various components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime that, as I mentioned, need strengthening — including better control over sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, increased efforts to secure and protect nuclear material and facilities, a more inclusive and integrated export control system and the need for all States to conclude additional protocols — I should stress the importance of working collectively to address the sense of insecurity and instability that persists in many countries and regions. It is instructive that nearly all nuclear proliferation concerns are in areas of longstanding conflict and instability.

As we proceed, it is important, in my view, to recognize both the value and the limitations of the IAEA verification role. While the Agency can work effectively to bring to closure questions of compliance with legal and technical requirements, the long-term value of these efforts can only be realized to the extent that they are supported and reinforced by other components of the non-proliferation regime, such as export controls and compliance mechanisms.

Equally, and perhaps more importantly, these efforts should be followed by the necessary political dialogue among concerned States to address underlying issues of insecurity and to build confidence and trust.

This overview of the past year highlights achievements and challenges in all areas of Agency activity and reflects the dynamic nature of our programme in anticipating and responding to change. Whether a specific activity contributes to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, to enhancing the transfer and application of nuclear technologies, or to ensuring safety and security in their use, our commitment is always to respond to the needs and priorities of our member States.

I would like to conclude by expressing my continuing gratitude to the Government of Austria, which has now served for over four decades as a most gracious and welcoming host to the IAEA.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.18.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): As the representative of Canada, and on behalf of the Chair of the Board of

Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I am honoured to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.18 on the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The following countries, along with Canada, are sponsors of the text: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay.

Since the document was first circulated, the following have joined the list of sponsors: Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, United States of America and Venezuela. I hope that the new sponsors can be incorporated into the list before we adopt the draft resolution before us.

I also wish to thank the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for the statement he has just made, which supplements the information contained in the Agency's annual report. All of this highlights the scope and importance of the results achieved by the Agency over the past year.

(*spoke in French*)

The draft resolution before the General Assembly this year is consistent with the format adopted last year. It reflects an attempt to further rationalize our work and that of our colleagues in Vienna, while preserving the essence of the message that the General Assembly's adoption of the draft resolution sends to the international community.

In this year's draft resolution we note the exact dates and list the relevant resolutions and decision adopted by the Agency's General Conference at its 48th plenary meeting in September, retaining the substance of lengthier resolutions adopted in the past.

The draft resolution and the annual report give a detailed account of activities in areas of specific interest. So as to focus the attention of the Assembly on the most significant activities of the Agency, the draft resolution does not refer to resolutions adopted at the most recent IAEA General Conference related to budgetary or procedural issues. This means that, of 17 resolutions adopted, only seven substantive resolutions are mentioned. Also mentioned is the sole decision adopted by the General Conference. In operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would take note of the decisions and of each of those resolutions that relate to one of the three pillars of the Agency's activities, namely, nuclear safety, technology transfer and verification of peaceful use.

In closing, I would like to note that all the decisions and resolutions adopted at the most recent General Conference were a result of the constructive efforts of IAEA member States and were adopted by consensus in Vienna. I also wish to thank Member States for the broad support that this new approach and the text of draft resolution A/59/L.18 have received over the course of the informal consultations that Ambassador Hall chaired in Vienna, which resulted in broad and solid consensus. The consultations we have been holding over the past week in New York have also revealed widespread support for the initiative. At the time, we asked Member States present in the consultations not to reopen issues already negotiated and agreed upon in Vienna.

At this stage, I would like to repeat the appeal to all States and to express the hope that draft resolution A/59/L.18 will be adopted by a broad majority and, if possible, by consensus.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the Countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President, allow me first of all to thank Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA), for his statement on the report of the IAEA activities in 2004.

The EU commends the secretariat of the IAEA and its Director General for the excellent work done by

the Agency and for the importance of the results achieved last year. EU member States welcome the outcome of the forty-eighth IAEA General Conference, held in Vienna from 20 to 24 September 2004, and the resolutions and decisions that were adopted at the Conference.

EU member States are sponsors of the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA (A/59/L.18) and fully support its content. The draft resolution reflects broad agreement among IAEA member States and is the result of consultations held in Vienna. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors and hope that the present draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

I should like to touch briefly upon a few elements of the role of the IAEA within the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and its contributions to that regime, as illustrated by the report (GC(48)/3) submitted to the Assembly under the provisions of the annex of General Assembly resolution 1145 (XII), and transmitted by the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/59/295.

The EU continues to regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and as the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT. The EU believes that a nuclear non-proliferation regime of universal character, supported by a strong system of international safeguards, is an essential prerequisite for collective security. In recent years, challenges to the Treaty and to the non-proliferation regime have highlighted the necessity of full compliance and the need to work actively towards universal adherence. In that regard, the EU will continue its efforts to maintain the authority and integrity of the Treaty.

The international safeguards system of the IAEA is an essential part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is a technical instrument in support of the political goal of sustaining an environment in which there can be the peaceful use of nuclear energy without the diversion of nuclear material or the concealment of nuclear material and of nuclear activities directed to nuclear weapons. In that context, EU member countries recognize the continued need for a properly funded safeguards system that is both effective and cost-efficient and that is therefore credible, robust and complied with.

The universal adoption and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and of their additional protocols are prerequisites for an effective and credible safeguards system. In particular, the measures contained in the Additional Protocol are crucial to strengthening the ability of the IAEA to detect possible undeclared nuclear material and activities and to provide assurances regarding the absence of such activities. The EU therefore regrets that the number of safeguards agreements and additional protocols currently in force continues to be well below expectations. The EU urges those States that have not yet done so to sign and bring into force their respective safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

The NPT confers a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing obligations and rights on States parties. Full compliance with the Treaty and with the obligations deriving from it is of fundamental importance. Therefore, the EU reiterates the IAEA's specific calls for compliance. The challenges to compliance with the safeguards agreements must be addressed in a manner that upholds the integrity of the Treaty and the authority of the IAEA safeguards system, including through referral by the IAEA to the Security Council as appropriate.

The EU attaches the utmost importance to a high level of nuclear safety worldwide. Although safety is a national responsibility, international cooperation on this issue is indispensable. Nuclear safety is a permanent concern of the international community, and its continuous improvement should be the aim of all IAEA member States. The EU commends the Director General and the secretariat of the IAEA for continuing to help member States during the past year to establish and maintain a stringent nuclear security framework for nuclear installations and materials.

Finally, the fight against terrorism and against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction deserves a specific reference, as it represents a challenge of paramount importance to the international community. EU member States strongly support all appropriate measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons. Although the primary responsibility for the necessary nuclear security rests with member States, the IAEA clearly has an essential role to play in preventing and combating nuclear terrorism. In that respect, we look forward to cooperation between the

IAEA and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

In conclusion, we all live in an increasingly interdependent world in which we must ensure our own security and safety and those of one another. That certainly holds true for nuclear security and safety. By the same token, all of us have an obligation to continue to ensure and enhance access for everyone to the benefits of nuclear knowledge, technology, equipment and materials. The IAEA — with its central and indispensable role as the competent authority to help provide, guarantee and verify nuclear safeguards and safety and as the initiator and facilitator of cooperation in the area of nuclear technology — remains uniquely placed to advance that goal. In view of that fact, the EU reaffirms its full support for the IAEA and is pleased to sponsor the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA, now before the Assembly.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): We, the countries members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated States Bolivia, Chile and Peru, reaffirm our active and constant commitment to the international community's objectives of non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, guaranteeing the right of all States to develop research to produce and utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In that connection, we emphasize the efforts of the international community to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, thus contributing to increased transparency and mutual trust. At the same time, we consider it necessary to continue to work to achieve a cost-effective verification mechanism with a high degree of technical quality and credibility. We understand that strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must be in keeping with the preservation and consolidation of multilaterally negotiated international norms.

We welcome the new members of the IAEA and call for the development of a consensus that would include the greatest possible number of countries to help create an atmosphere of trust and legitimacy with regard to decisions. Moreover, we recognize the importance of the Action Plan for the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials as an essential stimulus for the coordination of national and international efforts in that area.

In conclusion, we wish to point out that the joint accountability and control system implemented by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials continues to establish parameters for cooperation between the Republic of Argentina and Brazil.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to thank Director General ElBaradei for his detailed report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over the past year. We are glad to see that, with the joint efforts of the secretariat and all member States, the Agency carried out plenty of work during the past year and made remarkable achievements. We wish to congratulate the secretariat on those achievements and hope that, with the support of all member States, the Agency will continue to play an active role in the fields of promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of China's accession to the IAEA. In the past 20 years, the Chinese Government has actively supported the IAEA in its activities of promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation, as mandated by the Statute.

In the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, China has enjoyed extensive cooperation with the Agency and other member States in achieving fruitful results. As of 2003, China dispatched more than 2,000 people to other member States for training and scientific visits, and also received more than 1,200 expert visitors through the Agency's Technical Cooperation (TC) programmes.

In the meantime, China has made voluntary contributions of $13 million, in addition to other contributions in kind, to the Agency. China has also provided other member States with technological personnel training for more than 2,000 people, and organized more than 200 meetings of the Agency. Through participation in the Agency's TC programmes, China, as a developing country, has not only made progress in the development of nuclear power at home, but has also made appropriate contributions to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region.

In the field of nuclear non-proliferation, China strongly supports the Agency's efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards regime. In 2002, China ratified the Additional Protocol to the Agreement for the Application of Safeguards, being the first among the five nuclear-weapon States to do so. In 2003, the Chinese Government published a white paper entitled, "China's Non-Proliferation Policies and Measures", which systematically describes China's non-proliferation policy and practices, reflecting China's determination and sincerity with regard to non-proliferation.

In March 2004, China made a political commitment to the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Since then, China has implemented that commitment through the promulgation of relevant laws and regulations, thus establishing a national regulatory system.

In May 2005, China joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Moreover, China has lent support to and played a constructive role in the amendment process of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. It is our hope that States parties will reach a consensus on the amendments at an early date, so that a diplomatic conference on the amendments can be convened. China will continue to play a supportive role and participate in the Agency's activities.

Now I would like to briefly introduce China's position on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue, and the Iran nuclear issue. The Chinese Government has shown great concern for the peace and stability of North-East Asia. We have all along advocated that the Korean Peninsula should be denuclearized and that the peace and stability of the North-East Asia region should be maintained through dialogue and peaceful consultations. While addressing the nuclear issue, the legitimate security concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should also be addressed.

For that reason, China has been actively engaged in promoting peace and facilitating talks. China has hosted three rounds of the Six-Party Talks, which established the objectives of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and peaceful settlement through dialogue. The Six-Party Talks have already entered the stage of substantive negotiations and it is fair therefore, to say that they have achieved positive results. Continuation of the talks and working to start a new round of the Talks at an earlier date are in the interest of all parties concerned; this also represents the common wish of the international community.

We should also not lose sight of the fact that the issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is complex. We hope that all parties will remain patient and sincere and will show flexibility. China will adhere to its objective and just position and will continue its efforts, together with the international community, to reach a peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

On the Iran nuclear issue, China stands for an appropriate resolution — within the framework of the IAEA — through dialogue and consultation. We hope Iran will continue its comprehensive cooperation with the Agency so as to clarify all the outstanding issues and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible. All parties should encourage Iran to continue to adopt measures conducive to enhancing trust and clarifying doubts.

China supports all diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iran nuclear issue at an early date, and is ready to keep in touch with all the parties in that regard. It is our wish and belief that, with the concerted efforts of all parties, the Iran nuclear issue could be resolved properly within the framework of the Agency. Such a result is not only in the interest of all parties concerned but also conducive to the maintenance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to a dear friend, Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for presenting the Agency's annual report. The Agency continues to perform a commendable role under the dynamic stewardship of Mr. ElBaradei, contributing to peace and security and socio-economic development in an increasingly complex and challenging international environment. Pakistan assures Mr. ElBaradei and his team of our full support.

We agree with the Agency's assessment that global socio-economic development needs will require a large increase in the supply of energy in the coming decades. The role of nuclear energy will be crucial in supplying part of that requirement, especially in view of its environmental friendliness and its sustainability,

which is needed for development, especially in the developing countries.

The Agency has projected a 20 per cent increase in global nuclear requirements until 2020. We note with interest, that most of that increase will be required by Asia since out of 31 reactors currently under construction worldwide, 20 are located in Asia and 19 of the 28 reactors to be connected to the grids are in the Far East and South Asia.

The pace of construction of the reactors could be further increased if States were not subjected to undue restrictions. With innovative technologies, safe nuclear power plants are a reality and can be constructed in energy-deficient developing countries. In that regard, the IAEA's role in the transfer of safe technology to developing countries has assumed added significance. We hope that the Agency will formulate a comprehensive policy towards that end.

The Government of Pakistan attaches the highest importance to the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency, as it offers unique opportunities to the developing countries for prosperity and economic growth with the availability of easy and affordable sources of energy. In view of Pakistan's limited fossil fuel resources and the need to achieve a balance between the risks of industrial pollution and our economic growth, we consider nuclear-power generation as an indispensable element of our national energy strategy. For over 30 years, Pakistan's two nuclear power plants, KANUPP and CHASNUPP, have enjoyed an excellent operational and safety record. The existence of a reliable infrastructure relevant to the nuclear power plants has enabled us to commence work on another nuclear power station — CHASNUPP II.

Pakistan's future nuclear-power-generation activities will not be confined to the installation of more power plants, but extend to the utilization of some of those facilities for powering desalination plants. As a result of collaborative efforts with the IAEA, a desalination unit at KANUPP has been in service since 2000, producing about 450 cubic metres of fresh water per day through the desalination of sea water.

The Agency has also played a commendable role in the health sector — especially in the treatment of cancer and tuberculosis. In the agricultural sector, too, innovative technologies have helped in the protection of crops and in enhancing agricultural productivity. A sustained effort would be required to allocate more resources to the IAEA to carry out further research work in the health and agriculture sectors, which could immensely reduce hunger, disease and poverty in the world.

Pakistan is also applying the nuclear sciences to the development of health and agriculture and the reclamation of wasteland. We appreciate the growing cooperation between the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and the IAEA in this field. This year, Pakistan established its thirteenth nuclear medical centre and is working on setting up five more such centres, including the country's first positron emission tomography diagnostic facility in Pakistan.

In agriculture, our centres continue to evolve new crop varieties. We have established five demonstration farms to utilize salinity-affected lands. Pakistan is also interested in playing a substantive role in the international effort to promote the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO) so that Pakistan can benefit from the safe, cost-effective and proliferation-resistant nuclear power plants of the future.

We are highly sensitive to the safety and security of our nuclear installations, particularly as we are extending our nuclear-power-generation capacities for economic development. Pakistan has successfully established a strong safety culture in its nuclear activities. We are diligently adhering to the principles of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which Pakistan signed at the time of its inception. We have further strengthened security measures around our nuclear installations to avoid any possibility of sabotage or of the illicit acquisition of or trafficking in nuclear material. We will continue our active participation in the Agency's initiative to strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We are desirous of an early conclusion of the deliberations on the Convention, and hope that that important instrument will establish more comprehensive obligations globally regarding the physical protection of nuclear materials, as well as of nuclear facilities. We have, however, made it clear that any provisions in the new Convention which can be construed as legitimizing attacks on nuclear facilities are against international law and morality. This issue requires a satisfactory solution.

As part of our efforts to augment the safety and security of nuclear installations and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Pakistan has undertaken additional measures. These include, first, effective steps, in cooperation with the international community, to eliminate an underground proliferation network which had its tentacles in two dozen countries. We have cooperated closely with the IAEA in that endeavour and urge others concerned to do likewise.

Secondly, Pakistan has adopted wide-ranging measures to ensure foolproof security for its nuclear and strategic assets. Four years ago, we established a Nuclear Command and Control Authority, which is responsible for Pakistan's nuclear and strategic assets. Those assets are vital for our strategic deterrence posture. There is no question of their falling into the wrong hands. Thirdly, in 2001 we created a nuclear regulatory authority for the safe operation of civilian nuclear plants. Fourthly, since 2000 Pakistan has been elaborating legislation to implement its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Finally, last month Pakistan's parliament promulgated a comprehensive Export Control Act to deal with nuclear and biological weapons, material, goods, technologies, equipment and their means of delivery. Salient elements of our new law include a prohibition on the diversion of controlled goods and technologies, including re-export, trans-shipment and transit; licensing and record-keeping; export control lists; and penal provisions of up to 14 years imprisonment and a fine of 5 million rupees. We are confident that there will be no proliferation of weapons of mass destruction from Pakistan.

The safety and verification aspects of the IAEA's mandate remain important pillars of the Agency's work. The Agency has initiated action with regard to the safety of nuclear materials. There is a need to focus attention on securing "orphan" sources of such materials which are in immediate danger of falling into the wrong hands. The Agency's report highlights this aspect, and we fully agree with the remedial measures suggested in that regard.

As regards the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, Pakistan believes that the maintenance of a proper balance between the promotional aspects and safety- or security-related concerns in all of the Agency's functions is essential. We believe that States must fully comply with their respective safeguards obligations. At the same time, the Agency's safeguards should not be used to serve partisan political objectives. Its verification regime will be able to remain credible only if it is applied on a non-discriminatory basis, as stipulated in the Agency's statutes. Cooperation and greater understanding is required among all the States members of the Agency so as to advance its mandate on the basis of impartiality, equity and professionalism.

The Agency's role should be consistent with its statutes. Proposals for reform should be within the scope of the Statute. The IAEA is not an investigative agency. It cannot be asked to perform tasks which are beyond the scope of its Statute or not approved by its membership. Any reform in the Agency should be non-discriminatory and inclusive and take into account the differentiated nature of the obligations of its member States. Finally, such reforms should not undermine the balance between the promotional role of the Agency and the safety- or security-related concerns involved in its functions.

We all have great expectations of the IAEA in the promotion of the socio-economic development of member States. The Agency's technical cooperation requires a reassessment of its current framework whereby it can render assistance to member States on non-discriminatory and equitable basis. Apart from ensuring balance between the promotional aspects and verification, safety- and security-related functions, the following measures could help in enhancing its contribution to socio-economic development: first, the preservation of its technical nature and the prevention of the politicization of its agenda; secondly, a greater emphasis on the technical cooperation activities of the Agency and its contribution to the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses and technology transfers to developing countries; thirdly, the allocation of larger and more assured resources for technical cooperation activities, technology transfer and training facilities for developing countries; and, fourthly, the greater involvement of developing countries in the design and implementation of technical cooperation projects and increased outsourcing to developing member States for its Technical Cooperation Programme.

Ms. Martina (Ukraine): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his statement on the main developments in the Agency's activities during 2004. Ukraine commends the secretariat of IAEA and its Director General for the excellent work done by the Agency, as well as for the important results achieved over the past year.

I would also like to extend our welcome to the new members of the Agency: the Republic of Chad, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Togolese Republic.

Fifty years ago the United Nations General Assembly adopted its landmark resolution 810 (IX), entitled "International cooperation in developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy", which called for the establishment of the IAEA. Today, when the risk of nuclear proliferation has changed and increased, we have no other choice but to use our best efforts to further strengthen the activities of the Agency to ensure that nuclear technologies developed for peaceful purposes will not be misused for non-peaceful activities.

Ukraine underscores the significance of the safeguards system and the importance of the work done by the Agency to implement the safeguards provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We fully endorse measures envisaged by the Additional Protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreements. As of today, the preparatory activities for the ratification of the Additional Protocol, signed by Ukraine in 2000, have been completed and ratification is expected very soon.

As regards unresolved compliance matters, Ukraine welcomes the historic decision by the Libyan leadership to give up its weapons of mass destruction programmes and to cooperate closely with the international community to that end.

Ukraine recognizes the inalienable right of Iran to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. At the same time, we support IAEA efforts aimed at providing credible assurances regarding the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. Ukraine hails the signing by Iran, in December 2003, of the Additional Protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement and hopes that that fact — along with further active cooperation of the Government in Tehran with IAEA — will help remove concerns over Iran's nuclear activities.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula continues to cause concern. Ukraine shares the conviction that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should relinquish its nuclear ambitions, resume its cooperation with IAEA and return to compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the IAEA safeguards agreement without delay. We support an early settlement of the crisis by political and diplomatic means, which we do not believe are exhausted. Ukraine hopes that the multilateral dialogue on that issue will be continued.

We are confident that security and proliferation challenges can only be met successfully by multilateral cooperation. Ukraine considers that the NPT is an exceptionally important global instrument to that end. Ukraine is fully committed to the NPT and will continue its efforts to maintain the authority and integrity of the Treaty.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Ukraine's accession to the NPT. There is no doubt that Ukraine's landmark decision to relinquish its nuclear capability and to accede to the Treaty contributed significantly to the enhancement of the international non-proliferation regime and to global security.

Ukraine welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which calls on all Member States to enact effective domestic controls to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We highly appreciate the IAEA's readiness to assist States in implementing that resolution.

A strategy to counter nuclear terrorism should cover all types of risk, including the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorists or their production of various kinds of nuclear explosives from either nuclear or radioactive material. All possible measures have to be taken in order to provide proper protection against malicious acts on facilities or transport containers housing nuclear or radioactive materials.

In that context, Ukraine supports urgent measures to strengthen multilateral control over the nuclear fuel cycle and to improve the safety and physical protection of nuclear material and facilities. We welcome the creation by the IAEA Director General of a group of experts tasked with developing better approaches to control the sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle and we look forward to the results of its work.

Ukraine considers the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material as one of the key instruments for preventing nuclear proliferation and the risk of nuclear terrorism. We reiterate our support for finalizing the ongoing process of amendment of the Convention as soon as possible.

The newly revised Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources is another important landmark instrument. We call upon all IAEA member States that have not done so to adopt and implement the Code of Conduct without delay.

Ukraine strongly supports IAEA activities to reinforce national programmes to identify, secure, recover and facilitate the disposition of vulnerable nuclear and other high-risk radioactive materials. For Ukraine that issue is of special importance, taking into account the significant amount of fuel-containing masses in the destroyed fourth power unit at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the radioactive material present in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. IAEA participation in resolving those problems, as well as international assistance within the framework of bilateral and multilateral projects, should be adequate to solve the complex range of issues presented by the "Shelter" object and the Chernobyl exclusion zone.

Ukraine has filed its national report for the third Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety to be held in 2005. The report clearly demonstrates our progress and achievements in the field of nuclear safety over past years.

For Ukraine, 2004 has been a year marked by two outstanding events: the commissioning of new power units at the Khmelnitska and Rivnenska nuclear power plants. I would like to express our gratitude to all the international institutions that have made valuable contributions to the completion of the units' construction, undertaking numerous research projects and expert examinations and elaborating the necessary recommendations to that end. Today, we can certify that the two new power units conform to the highest level of design safety standards of all the units currently operating in Ukraine.

We consider implementation of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme to be the cornerstone of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are pleased to see the IAEA secretariat continuing its efforts to improve the Programme's effectiveness and efficiency through evaluations, audits and process reviews. Agency activities in the field of nuclear sciences and applications in the non-power sector also contribute significantly to sustainable development.

In conclusion, Ukraine notes the importance of placing greater emphasis in the Technical Cooperation Programme for Europe on issues of safety and security, radiation and transport safety, management of radioactive waste, national health programmes, environmental issues and problems related to decommissioning of nuclear power plants or their life extension, which remain priorities for my country within the framework of technical cooperation with the Agency.

Mr. Devamany (Malaysia): I join others in thanking Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation to the General Assembly of the annual report of the Agency for the calendar year 2003, as contained in document GC(48)/3. It was a year of notable success for the Agency in its efforts to ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology were shared globally for economic and social development. My delegation commends the excellent work and efforts of the Agency in fulfilling its mandate during the period under review.

Malaysia continues to recognize the value of nuclear technology for the achievement of sustainable development and the process of nation-building and the role played by the Agency in this regard. We reaffirm our support for the Agency in its mission to promote and facilitate the development of nuclear technology for peaceful uses, as embodied in Article II of its Statute.

In this connection, the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency remains a crucial component of its mandate and activities. Malaysia is a beneficiary of this Programme, and we commend the IAEA Department of Technical Cooperation for its continuous efforts in discharging its statutory mandate for the benefit of recipient member States, as well as for its creditable achievements.

The success of the Technical Cooperation Programme is very much determined by the sustained availability and sufficient level of financial resources. As a member State that has long participated in and benefited from the Programme, Malaysia has

consistently fulfilled, in full and on time, its financial obligations to the Agency, including to the Technical Cooperation Fund and the assessed programme costs. In this connection, Malaysia is concerned over the shortfall in the current level of payments received in 2004 for the Fund, as reported during the 48th Session of the General Conference of the Agency last September.

Similarly, Malaysia is concerned over the fact that pledges and payments to the Fund for 2004 stand at only 65.4 per cent of the target, with fewer than 60 per cent of member States having made known their intentions. Malaysia urges other member States, both donors and recipients, to disburse their target share in full and on time. This should be done in the interest of promoting and safeguarding the inalienable, collective and individual national rights of member States to the peaceful uses of atomic energy through the Programme, as envisaged under Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In relation to financial contributions pledged to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2005, Malaysia, in pledging its full assessed target share, urges those member States that have not yet done so to make their pledges without delay. Member States should disburse their contributions in full at the earliest opportunity. Reasonably assured financial resources would certainly facilitate the Agency's work in preparing a proposed Technical Cooperation Programme for 2005, which would be considered by the meeting of the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee of the Agency later this month. We hope that the approved Programme will be successfully implemented without hindrance or uncertainty.

Nuclear terrorism poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We must continue to be vigilant and to consolidate our collective efforts to prevent terrorists and non-State actors from acquiring nuclear weapons and using them to achieve their objectives. Malaysia has taken, and will continue to take, appropriate measures to prevent this threat, in accordance with the principles of international law and the relevant instruments, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In this connection, Malaysia remains supportive of the continuous efforts of the IAEA in promoting nuclear security, in particular through providing assistance and technical support to member States. Malaysia also believes that while measures to promote nuclear security and to combat nuclear trafficking should indeed be stepped up, serious efforts should concurrently be made to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons to provide an absolute guarantee against the use of such weapons.

Malaysia supports IAEA verification activities, in accordance with Article III of the NPT, to ensure that peaceful nuclear technology is not transformed to fulfil military purposes. As a State party to the NPT, Malaysia remains convinced that the continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to the survival of humanity and the planet and that their use would have catastrophic consequences for our civilization. In this connection, Malaysia is committed to pursuing particularly the total abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons, including new types of nuclear weapons. We strongly believe that the absolute goal of a nuclear weapon-free world must remain high on the international disarmament agenda. The continued possession, proliferation and improvement of nuclear weapons should be a source of great concern to the international community in the light of the grave danger that they pose to international peace and security. Malaysia believes that the States parties to the NPT must genuinely revisit the issue of compliance by both the nuclear weapon States and the non-nuclear weapon States at the 2005 Review Conference here in New York in May next year.

Malaysia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), has consistently expressed NAM's appreciation to the Director General and secretariat of the Agency for their reports to the Board of Governors of the Agency, in particular on the question concerning the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The NAM has reiterated its full confidence in the ability of the Director General and the Agency in discharging their duties and responsibilities in an impartial, effective and professional manner. The Non-Aligned Movement countries believe that such questions should be resolved within the mandate of the Agency.

Malaysia once again expresses its appreciation to Mr. József Rónaki of Hungary, President of the 48th regular session of the IAEA General Conference held last September and to the Vice-Presidents for their leadership in guiding the General Conference to a successful conclusion. My delegation commends Mr. Ibrahim Othman of the Syrian Arab Republic for

the efficient manner in which he chaired the Committee of the Whole. Malaysia recognizes that none of the resolutions adopted by the General Conference require immediate follow-up action. This notwithstanding, Malaysia has full confidence in the Director General and the Agency to carefully examine all decisions and resolutions of the General Conference and to make appropriate recommendations thereto in due course.

In this connection, my delegation would like to refer to resolution GC(48)/RES/14 of the General Conference, entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system and application of the Model Additional Protocol". Malaysia, like other Member Countries of NAM, attaches great importance to the effectiveness and strengthening of the safeguards system, as well as to the maintenance of an appropriate balance between the Agency's verification and other statutory functions.

NAM worked in good faith to ensure the consensual adoption of the resolution. In the meetings of the Board of Governors during the preceding week, NAM expressed its serious concern over the complications that might arise if no clear distinction was made between the legal obligations of member States under their respective safeguards agreements and their voluntary commitments. Moreover, voluntary commitments should be entered into for a specified period and should cease to be binding once the relevant requirements have been met. Member States should respect the fundamental principle that decisions and resolutions on safeguards issues should be compatible with the relevant provisions of the Statute and the rights and obligations of States under relevant treaties and their safeguards agreements. Malaysia is indeed pleased that those views are shared by other members of the Board of Governors.

Malaysia recognizes that consensus was elusive on the question of compatibility of decisions relating to safeguards with the relevant provisions of the Statute. As such, Malaysia and the member countries of NAM take serious note of the fact that the statement by the delegation of the Netherlands, on behalf of the sponsors of the resolution on that question, explicitly recognized the importance of all the provisions of the Statute in that regard. However, that pronouncement fell short of the expectations of NAM on the definitive importance of the relevant treaties and concluded safeguards agreements. Similarly, Malaysia notes with concern the attempts to amend the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) through the Agency. Malaysia reiterates that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is the most appropriate forum to discuss any question relating to the NPT.

Malaysia joins other member States of the Agency that belong to the G-77 and China in expressing confidence in, and supporting the candidacy of, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the current Director General of the Agency, for a further term. The position of the Group was formally conveyed by the Vienna chapter of the G-77 on 7 September 2004. We hope that his candidacy will be successful.

Finally, Malaysia will join others in supporting the draft resolution on this item that is now before the Assembly in document A/59/L.18. Malaysia considers that text to be a procedural one, and its provisions should remain as they are since the text reflects the broad agreement reached among member States of the Agency in Vienna. We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Egyptian delegation expresses its appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his statement, in which he highlighted the Agency's singular contribution in 2003 to its major areas of responsibility and activities. He also informed the Assembly of future challenges that we must be prepared to tackle.

I also express our appreciation for the Director General's wise management, which has notably enhanced the Agency's performance and left it better prepared to face current and future challenges with the professionalism and credibility we have come to expect.

The report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/59/295) stresses the importance of the Agency's role in protecting the non-proliferation regime and in enhancing it and in preserving the regime's credibility. The Agency has demonstrated that it is the principal body with the objectivity and credibility to take concrete action to place safeguards on the nuclear activities of States. The Agency is also making important, concrete efforts in the areas of transfer of nuclear technology for numerous and diverse peaceful uses, thus contributing to sustainable

development in the majority of countries, in particular developing countries.

We hope that in the near future the Agency will generate many ideas and proposals to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, particularly if agreement on those ideas — in a revised package so to speak — can be reached at the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We imagine that the Agency will be the main body for implementing those ideas and proposals, and we hope that the Agency will do so with the same professionalism, objectivity and credibility it has demonstrated in dealing with various sensitive issues.

The increasing role of the Agency in supporting and spreading the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as technical cooperation with member States, developing States in particular, are no less important than its verification and non-proliferation efforts, although those latter efforts receive the most attention in the press. Many efforts are being made to enhance the Agency's safeguards regime, and a similar impetus must be given to the Agency's activities in technical cooperation. The dramatic increase in the Agency's membership is due to the fact that member States in the developing world have joined the IAEA essentially to benefit from the Agency's programmes and activities in peaceful nuclear applications and to use that assistance to achieve their development goals, in accordance with article IV of the NPT treaty.

We express our appreciation for developing and improving the effectiveness and goals of technical cooperation programmes, especially in helping to determine the priorities of the States. We believe that there should be greater focus on those programmes providing concrete results and on early consultations with member States on the details of projects undertaken by States. Egypt is fully prepared to continue its cooperation with the Agency in programmes related to economic development and other, related fields.

With respect to safeguards and verification, we stress once again that the lack of universality in applying the Agency's comprehensive safeguards prevents those safeguards from being successful, as far as the threat of nuclear proliferation is concerned. Comprehensive safeguards are the main foundation for non-proliferation. Thus, we believe it is very important to continue working towards universality.

Egypt has put forward many initiatives at the international and regional levels to counter the threat of nuclear proliferation. Twenty-five years ago, we called for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The President of Egypt has also called for a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. Egypt, through the IAEA, continues to call for implementation of comprehensive Agency safeguards for all nuclear installations in the Middle East, without exception.

Despite all those initiatives to promote security and stability in the region, Israel, one of the States of the region, has shown no desire to act in a serious constructive manner to counter the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. It continually rejects all initiatives to submit its nuclear facilities to the Agency's international safeguards. That situation negatively impacts on all efforts to tackle nuclear non-proliferation in general, in particular efforts in the Middle East, and requires the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate the threat of nuclear proliferation to international peace and security and to seek to apply the Agency's comprehensive safeguards throughout the Middle East. We believe that the forum that the Director General is to hold early next year is an encouraging first step in tackling some of the issues related to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We therefore express our support for this initiative and declare our intention to participate therein.

As for nuclear safety, the events of 11 September 2001 have shown the urgent need to strengthen the efforts of the Agency and its programmes to protect nuclear materials and installations as well as other radioactive materials from the threat of international terrorism. Egypt believes that as long as there are nuclear materials not subjected to any international supervision and monitoring, the threat of them falling into terrorist hands will remain. Egypt has participated effectively in the Agency's efforts to promulgate proposed measures and activities to avoid nuclear terrorism. Egypt believes that such efforts cannot substitute for national measures, that they in no way lessen the responsibility that States bear in dealing with security issues and that they are voluntarily financed. Egypt looks forward to future efforts and measures in this regard as being complementary to technical

cooperation efforts and programmes, without impairing the resources of the technical cooperation fund.

While we welcome the efforts of the Advisory Group on Nuclear Security set up by the Director General, we hope that Member States will be kept aware of its activities in a regular manner. We stress that any production of fissile materials should meet the requirement to subject nuclear materials, including stockpiled materials, to monitoring, which is consistent with the objectives of the relevant Conventions.

In conclusion, we would like to express our continued support for the IAEA as we face future challenges. We would like once again to thank Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, Director General of the Agency, for all the efforts he has continued to make to attain the objectives of the Agency with his well-known competence.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Rao Inderjit Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Singh (India): We congratulate the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the excellent role it has been playing in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and, in the process, ensuring that it is safe and secure. India has always worked very closely with the IAEA as a partner in development.

This year marks the golden jubilee of the establishment of the Department of Atomic Energy of India. Over the past fifty years, India's atomic energy programme has come of age. The self-reliant research and development activities undertaken by the scientists of the Department of Atomic Energy have led to robust industrial operations in heavy water power reactor technology and associated fuel cycle, heavy water and electronics and instrumentation, which have all demonstrated excellence in their commercial performance. We are now well-poised to translate our research and development achievements into commercial industrial activities related to fast power reactors and thorium reactors, as we continue to work for rapid expansion of nuclear power capacity based on thermal reactors. This step is in tune with our long-standing three-stage nuclear programme designed to meet the emerging large-scale electricity requirements of the country through the use of our modest uranium and vast thorium resources.

The Prime Minister of India recently launched the construction of the first 500 megawatt electrical nuclear power plant based on fast breeder reactors in India at Kalpakkam. I recall the following points that our Prime Minister made on the occasion:

> "Energy security is an issue of vital importance, particularly in the context of the accelerating pace of our economic growth. If we succeed in instituting an optimal mix of energy resources in which nuclear energy is an important component, we will be able to ensure our energy security. India's low per capita energy consumption currently cannot for long go hand in hand with our quest for an accelerated pace of economic growth. Energy security is therefore a national imperative. We must break the constraining limits of power shortages, which retard our development. Nuclear energy is not only cost-effective, it is also a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels. We are determined as a nation to utilize its full potential for the national good. It can also be a much-needed cushion against fluctuations of prices of petroleum products."

Given the huge demand for energy in a fast-developing economy like India, it has been our endeavour to develop comprehensive capabilities in the entire range of the nuclear fuel cycle, backed by research and development, and industrial and safety infrastructure. India today is among the leading countries that can reutilize spent fuel for production of power. This is essential to ensuring the sustained availability of nuclear power.

India has made significant strides in developing new technologies through indigenous research and development. The unique mixed plutonium-uranium carbide fuel in fast breeder test reactors has had a remarkable performance record. With the successful reprocessing of spent fuel from fast breeder test reactors, the fuel cycle for this reactor has been closed.

Work on a 300 megawatt electric advanced heavy water reactor, a technology demonstration for thorium utilization, including several important developments in the thorium fuel cycle, is progressing well. The work on a compact high temperature reactor is continuing.

India is working on the construction of the steady-state super-conducting tokamak, designed to be the first 1000-second steady-state tokamak. This can be used for a number of physics investigations of

relevance to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), which is an unprecedented international collaboration on the next major step for the development of fusion.

India is a responsible nuclear Power. We have developed our capability in this area in a self-reliant manner and are fully conscious of the immense responsibilities that come with the possession of such advanced capabilities. We remain committed, at the same time, to the objectives of non-proliferation. Therefore, as we continue to utilize our indigenous resources and capabilities to fulfil our national interests, we are doing so in a way that meets the requirements of those objectives. On the other hand, efforts to prevent proliferation should not impose undue restrictions on the development and utilization of nuclear energy.

We believe that it is incumbent upon all those who have a stake in the future of nuclear energy to work, in a constructive and cooperative manner, towards elaborating more effective measures that would check proliferation without constraining in any way the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Subject to this consideration, India is willing to be a partner in this effort and shoulder the obligations that flow from it.

India's nuclear energy programme is operated under the highest standards of safety and environment. Safety operations through the entire nuclear fuel cycle, from prospecting and mining of ores to the management of waste, encompass all the aspects of safety, including the radiological, industrial, occupational, fire and environmental spheres. An independent entity, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Body, monitors safety in conformity with standards recommended by the IAEA and the International Commission on Radiological Protection. Our indigenous reactors have multilayer safety features. The safety record of our reactors is among the best in the world.

The role of the IAEA in promoting several developmental programmes for the betterment of humankind by using nuclear technologies is unique, and must be encouraged and expanded. The Agency should, however, continue to operate within its technical expertise and in a transparent manner. It should not be utilized for political ends or objectives beyond its original purpose, which is that of promoting safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.

India has been an active supporter of IAEA programmes related to nuclear power, especially with regard to innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles. We have also been an active partner in programmes related to the safety and security of radioactive sources, managing nuclear knowledge — including knowledge-preservation and knowledge-dissemination — and strengthening education and training for capacity-building through networking. Several IAEA meetings, training programmes for IAEA fellows and scientific visits continue to take place in India. Our scientists have participated in a large number of IAEA expert assignments and coordinated research projects.

We re-emphasise that the IAEA, the unique, multidisciplinary, science-and-technology organization in the entire United Nations system, merits the unstinting support of the international community.

Mr. Sriwidjaja (Indonesia): Having listened with great interest to the comprehensive statement delivered by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who has highlighted the work done and the developments that have taken place concerning the IAEA during 2003-2004, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, IAEA Director General, as well as to the IAEA secretariat for their significant and valuable work in fulfilling the three pillars of the Agency's mandate. Indonesia pledges its full support to the IAEA, as one of the organizations of the United Nation system, to continue to uphold and maintain its central and universal role in addressing the enormous challenges ahead.

Indonesia is looking into the possibility of incorporating nuclear energy into its national energy policy for the period 2004 to 2020, as promulgated by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, which considers nuclear energy an essential component of the long-term energy needs of Indonesia. The results of the IAEA's supporting project on a comprehensive assessment of various energy sources for electricity generation in Indonesia — conducted during 2001 and 2002 — have been included in the long-term planning for Indonesia's energy policy.

In anticipation of the introduction of a nuclear power plant, the Indonesian Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency has embarked upon a comprehensive programme to develop the necessary infrastructure — including personnel — particularly in

activities connected with the licensing and inspection of nuclear power plants. The cooperation and assistance provided by the Agency with regard to capacity-building in the area of regulatory authorities is therefore still needed. In addition, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with advanced countries experienced in developing and operating nuclear power plants has become a necessity.

Pursuant to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Report for 2003, my delegation notes with satisfaction that commitments and support from Member States were clearly marked by a significant increase in extrabudgetary resources for the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme. A record high level of support — $11.8 million, up from $5.7 million in 2002 — reflects a commitment to bring about change for the improvement of socio-economic conditions through the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. We also note with satisfaction that 90 Country Programme Frameworks — 32 more than in 2002 — were utilized as planning tools to design, within the context of national priorities, technical cooperation projects that are now in place or awaiting final approval. In that connection, the Indonesian delegation at the IAEA's 48th General Conference, which was held in September 2004, officially submitted a new revised version of its Country Programme Framework, which was signed in November 2000.

Bearing in mind the significance of Country Programme Frameworks to national development, and the Agency's technical assistance programme, it is essential to reiterate the importance of international cooperation in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which is one of the fundamental pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The validity of article IV of the NPT and the inalienable right of all States parties to unimpeded and non-discriminatory transfer of nuclear technology and materials to developing countries play an indispensable role in catering to the requirements of national development. That is in line with the role of the Agency in assisting States parties to formulate international cooperative projects within the framework of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving their scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities based on each country's priority needs and decisions.

For over two decades, Indonesia has been committed to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the development and strengthening of links and cooperation, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, and especially with the IAEA. Through the support provided by its technical assistance programme, we have successfully applied nuclear techniques in many areas of national development programmes, including agriculture, industry, health care and environmental protection. In view of the plan to introduce nuclear power in the country as a strategic component to obtain an optimal long-term mix in Indonesia's sustainable national energy supply system, it is our intention to further strengthen such cooperation, not only with the Agency but also with countries that pioneered the application of this segment of nuclear technology.

Indonesia notes the progress made in the field of nuclear verification. According to IAEA document GC(48)/11, on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system, including the implementation of additional protocols, the number of safeguards agreements and additional protocols signed or in force has increased markedly. The total number of States with safeguards agreements has now reached 149, while the number of States with additional protocols in force has grown from 35 to 59. Despite the progress made so far, our task is not yet completed, as 108 States — including 17 with known significant nuclear activities — have yet to sign additional protocols, while 25 States — including 12 with significant nuclear activities — have signed additional protocols but still need to bring them into force.

Moreover, of the States parties to the NPT, 43 have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency, pursuant to that Treaty. If the IAEA safeguards system is to be able to provide credible assurances regarding non-diversion of nuclear material and about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities, it must be given the requisite authority. Therefore, in line with document GC(48)/RES/14, Indonesia calls upon all States having made non-proliferation commitments — in particular those with significant nuclear activities — to bring into force and implement the legal instruments of the strengthened safeguards system.

To this end, Indonesia has initiated the implementation of integrated safeguards at the State

level. We strongly believe that these measures will strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system and the application of the model additional protocol, as well as the Agency's verification system. We also strongly believe that States — developing countries in particular — having Additional Protocols in place, in their pursuit of the development, production, and application of nuclear energy and knowledge for peaceful purposes, should be granted preferential treatment in obtaining technical cooperation for the advancement of their national development.

In the field of nuclear security and safety, Indonesia commends the IAEA's efforts to assist Member States in increasing their nuclear security, as well as the Agency's high priority for formulating measures to prevent the theft of nuclear material and the sabotage of nuclear facilities. The Agency's shared concern over the risk of radiological terrorism has given increased emphasis to improving the security of other radioactive material and to countering illicit trafficking.

Indonesia expresses its appreciation to the IAEA for having dispatched expert missions to Indonesia aimed at strengthening the physical protection of our nuclear and radiological infrastructure. Such technical assistance provided by the Agency is not merely embedded in the preparation of a conceptual framework, but is also central to improving the existing rules and regulations for nuclear safety and radiation protection, as well as the enhancement of our human resources capabilities.

In this connection, Indonesia reiterates its widely shared view that nuclear security must be one of the world's priorities and, accordingly, calls upon all concerned parties to do their utmost in supporting efforts to strengthen international cooperation, as highlighted in the 48th General Conference resolutions GC(48)/RES/10 and GC(48)/RES/11, on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste safety, and progress on measures to protect against nuclear and radiological terrorism, respectively.

Mr. López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General, for introducing the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which covers the period from 1 January through 31 December 2003.

As can be seen clearly from the IAEA annual report, the Cuban Government has continued to take positive steps that clearly show its political determination to comply with all obligations it has undertaken as a State party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

On 18 September 2003, the Republic of Cuba signed both the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement and its Additional Protocol. Subsequently, on 27 May 2004, we ratified the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the corresponding Additional Protocol. On 23 August 2004, Cuba submitted to the secretariat of the IAEA its initial report on nuclear material, reaffirming Cuba's determination to continue to strengthen its cooperation with the IAEA in the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In addition, we wish to recall that on 5 and 6 November 2003, as further evidence of our firm commitment to peace and to multilateralism, my country hosted the 18th regular session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. That event concluded successfully and adopted a final document, the Havana Declaration. The Conference was an appropriate occasion for officially recognizing Cuba's ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which allowed for the full entry into force of this international instrument and the consolidation of the first densely populated zone of the planet as a zone completely free of nuclear weapons. All of those actions are completely in line with our position of principle that military doctrines based on the possession of nuclear weapons are unacceptable.

In turn, as a State party to the NPT, Cuba has been actively involved in the preparatory process for the upcoming NPT Review Conference. We are convinced that the only way to overcome limitations to the NPT is precisely by complying with the objective of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons under strict international verification. That would guarantee the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, which is the main objective of the IAEA.

In compliance with the provisions of the NPT, the legitimate right of States to have full access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be respected. The

imposition of unilateral restrictive measures in the exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be halted. In addition, we reiterate our rejection of the approach that favours horizontal non-proliferation, without bearing in mind the constant increase in vertical proliferation.

Cuba places particular importance on the activities of the IAEA, and we reiterate the need to achieve an adequate balance among the three basic pillars of that organization, namely, technical cooperation, safety and verification.

We highlight the role of the IAEA, not only as a guarantor of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but also as an institution that promotes and implements international cooperation in that field. In that regard, my country hopes the General Assembly will reaffirm the Agency's role, in accordance with the objectives and functions set out in its Statute in promoting research, development and the practical application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

We believe that a balance must exist between resources devoted to cooperation activities and those devoted to other activities of the Agency. In addition, my Government recognizes the important role played by nuclear technology for sustainable development, and we feel that technical cooperation activities of the IAEA are a vital element in the transfer of technology.

Historically, Cuba has benefited from this cooperation, and there are excellent signs of implementation, as well as an efficient use of resources. These resources have been aimed at priority programmes in the country in areas such as health, agriculture and industry, which have had a significant impact as a result of their implementation. For example, the implementation of a number of IAEA technical cooperation projects have contributed to improving our radiotherapy services, an important component in Cuba's programme to combat cancer that it has carried out for a number of years.

As a result, and despite enormous difficulties caused by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on it, Cuba has continued to comply systematically with its financial commitments to the IAEA.

In addition, Cuba wishes to reiterate its support for the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Advancement of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Cuba supports the efforts of the IAEA to implement programmes and activities aimed at providing protection against nuclear terrorism without affecting the human and financial resources involved in sustainable socio-economic development. In that regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate that only international cooperation based on full respect for the principles of international law, as well as the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, can provide an effective and sustainable response to the scourge of terrorism worldwide, including terrorism in which weapons of mass destruction are used.

The use of selective non-transparent mechanisms that function outside the United Nations and outside international treaties do not in any way provide an appropriate response to the phenomena of international terrorism, including terrorism involving the use of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems or related materials.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation for the detailed report by Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei on the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

At present, the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing serious challenges, and strengthening the non-proliferation regime is one of the most important tasks requiring action on the part of the international community.

At the same time, nuclear energy remains an important source of energy and contributes to the stability of the energy supply and the prevention of global warming. The peaceful applications of nuclear energy, which extend to such fields as health, agriculture and industry, are extremely beneficial to the economic and social development of the international community. It is for that reason that the dual role of the IAEA in promoting both the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the peaceful use of nuclear energy has taken on increasing importance.

Today I would like to mention briefly several of the activities of the IAEA that Japan considers to be the most important.

First, strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime is one of Japan's top foreign policy priorities.

Next year, 2005, is important in that it marks the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Japan and the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be convened . The international community is widely expected to renew its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at that Review Conference and intensify its efforts towards the realization of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

For the purpose of achieving substantive reinforcement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, strengthening of IAEA safeguards will be key. Japan, for its part, is continuing its efforts for the universalization of the NPT's Additional Protocol, which it regards as the most realistic and effective route to achieving that goal. I take this opportunity to urge those countries that have not yet concluded the Additional Protocol to do so at the earliest possible date.

Secondly, the nuclear programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a threat to the peace and stability of the North-East Asia region and a major challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with all international agreements pertaining to nuclear issues, including the NPT, and to abandon all of its nuclear programmes, including its uranium enrichment programme, in their entirety under credible international verification.

Thirdly, with regard to Iran, it is essential that the Iranian Government sincerely implement all requirements of the relevant IAEA resolutions. Efforts by Iran to enhance transparency and thereby dispel the deep concern of the international community will be essential for the early resolution of this issue.

Japan highly appreciates Libya's decision to abandon its nuclear programme and all other weapon of mass destruction programmes and move forward in cooperation with the international community. This represents one of the past year's great successes. We strongly urge other States of concern with respect to nuclear proliferation to follow Libya's example and commit to cooperating fully with the IAEA.

Finally, as a result of Japan's long years of cooperation, the implementation of integrated safeguards began in September of this year, making Japan the first country engaged in large-scale nuclear energy activities to implement those safeguards. In terms of both the enforcement of the measures and the example that it sets for other countries, we regard the implementation of integrated safeguards in Japan as a great accomplishment. Japan also welcomes the decisions taken by the IAEA from the point of view of encouraging the effective use of the limited resources available to us.

The international community is confronted with major challenges as it endeavours to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. At the same time, the expectations placed in the IAEA and the roles it is required to play have expanded. Be assured that Japan will continue to provide active assistance to the IAEA in fulfilling its critical mission.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are happy to welcome the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, and we are grateful to him for having introduced the annual report of the Agency.

Russia as an active member of the IAEA, is pleased with the activities of the Agency and takes note of its important and increasing role and significance in strengthening the international nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime and in providing for the necessary level of trust for cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the safe development of atomic energy. We reaffirm the need to further strengthen the safeguards system at the Agency and to enhance its effectiveness as the basis of the non-proliferation regime.

The particular relevance of effective action in the area of non-proliferation is dictated by the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) falling into the hands of terrorists. The savagery of recent terrorist acts, including in Russia, highlights the need to provide for effective guarantees to prevent access by terrorists to WMDs, particularly by reinforcing the joint efforts to create a global system to deal with the relevant challenges and threats, including nuclear ones.

Russia advocates very close international partnership in this area and is taking an active part in working in the area of non-proliferation. We were one of the initiators of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We are a party to the Proliferation Security Initiative, and we were a sponsor of the plan of action of the Group of Eight in the area of non-proliferation.

These initiatives are very much interlinked and should help to enhance the effectiveness of the WMD non-proliferation regime, which is particularly important on the eve of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We reiterate the key importance of the NPT in providing for international security. Unfortunately, the outcome of the recent session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference did not inspire optimism. It is important that all parties to the Treaty approach the 2005 review mindful of the need to preserve the NPT and to enhance its effectiveness on the basis of the non-proliferation regime.

Russia has consistently advocated the further strengthening of strategic stability. The Russian-American Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions came into force in June 2003 and constitutes a real contribution to implementing the obligations under article VI of the NPT. The importance of this Treaty transcends bilateral relations and is in the interest of all States. We also continue to implement the agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the United States of America dated 18 February 1993 regarding the use of highly enriched uranium derived from nuclear weapons.

We would like to reaffirm our support for the IAEA project on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles, which is being carried out under the aegis of the Agency pursuant to the resolution adopted by its General Conference in 2000 on the subject of strengthening the activities of the Agency relating to nuclear science, technology and applications. We view that project as a practical step to implement the initiative put forward at the Millennium Summit by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, to develop nuclear technologies that are resistant to proliferation.

Russia attaches great importance to the research and development of new nuclear technologies. In keeping with our Government-endorsed strategy for developing nuclear energy in Russia in the first half of the twenty-first century, work is being carried out on a number of innovative projects using fast neutron reactors, which will make it possible to resolve the problem of the use of weapons-grade plutonium in nuclear power stations with a fully closed fuel cycle.

Allow me to dwell on a few aspects of the Agency's activities that have great resonance around the world. We have been following developments regarding the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran and we continue to advocate the resolution of all outstanding questions in that regard through constructive interaction between Iran and the IAEA. We note the importance of prompt Agency action to switch its monitoring activities in that country into normal, routine channels, as is now the case in most States parties to the NPT, and we will work towards attaining that goal in the future. We hope that Iran will fully implement the provisions of the September resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors. We view that resolution as the Board of Governors plan of action, and we hope that by the November meeting of the Board it will be possible to clarify once and for all the questions that the Agency still has concerning past activities of Tehran in this area.

On the questions surrounding the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we would like to note that Russia has made political and diplomatic efforts for the prompt resumption of talks to resolve North Korea's nuclear problems within the six-party format. A comprehensive resolution of the problem should include the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, winding up the military nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the return of that country to the NPT regime and the renewal of its cooperation with the IAEA, while providing for the legitimate interests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through giving it security guarantees and creating conditions for the normal economic development of that country.

I would like to reaffirm our support for draft resolution A/59/L.18, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". Russia, fully cognizant of the importance of the work done by the Agency, has joined in sponsoring that draft.

Mr. De Figueiredo (Angola): On behalf of my delegation, I am pleased to convey to you, Mr. President, our warm congratulations on your well-deserved election. We are happy to see you presiding over the work of the General Assembly at its present session. Your election is a recognition of your high diplomatic skills and wide experience, as well as your country's important role within the international community. We also extend congratulations to your team.

Since its foundation in 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has sought to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity.

We have carefully reviewed the report of the Agency for 2003 and, in that regard, would like to express our appreciation for Agency activities developed under the three pillars of technical cooperation, safety and verification. In particular, my delegation appreciates the Agency's endeavours in developing nuclear applications and technologies for the benefit of African States, assisting us in applying nuclear technologies in the quest for sustainable development. In Africa we are still far from reaching the ultimate goal of providing our populations with adequate, healthy facilities, sufficient food and water and a safe environment.

At its forty-eighth session, the General Conference of the IAEA approved three resolutions on topics of the highest importance for the African continent: support for the African Union's Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign; development of the sterile insect technique for the control and eradication of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes; and the IAEA Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy. The implementation of those programmes is extremely important as they contribute to saving lives, as well as to reducing poverty, in the African region.

Tsetse flies — and the trypanosomiasis disease which they transmit — are a major transnational African problem and one of the greatest constraints on the socio-economic development of the African continent, affecting the health of humans and livestock, limiting land use and causing increased poverty. The disease claims the lives of tens of thousands of humans and millions of domestic animals every year, threatening over 60 million people in 37 countries — most of which are IAEA member States. Therefore, my country encourages the Agency to continue supporting African member States in their efforts to use the sterile insect technique to create tsetse-free-zones in Africa.

With regard to malaria, the development of the sterile insect technique for the control and eradication of mosquitoes is crucial. Malaria causes approximately 2 million deaths yearly, with over 90 per cent of the world's malaria cases occurring in Africa. The Agency should therefore intensify research with a view to enabling the use of the sterile insect technique for the control and eradication of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes. IAEA research, however, needs to increasingly involve more African and other developing member States' scientific and research institutes in their research programmes.

The increasing number of new cases of cancer and, consequently, the number of deaths it causes worldwide, particularly affects developing countries and threatens their socio-economic development. The use of existing nuclear technology for diagnosis and treatment could cure many cases of cancer if detected early. Unfortunately, appropriate technologies, including cobalt radiotherapy, are not available for most cancer patients in developing countries.

Considering the ongoing contributions of the Agency in the field of human health — in particular to nuclear medicine, including cobalt radiotherapy services in developing countries — and the financial and other participation of member States and others in the IAEA programme, we propose that the Agency strengthen its involvement in international partnerships with non-traditional donors in this area.

The Republic of Angola was admitted in 1999 as a member of the IAEA and since then it has benefited from the assistance provided by the Agency under its Technical Cooperation Programme. At present, we have four ongoing national projects in the areas of nuclear physics, the diagnosis of animal diseases, radiotherapy and marine pollution. We have also been participating in several regional projects. However, it is important to stress that we can only maximize the benefits from such assistance if it includes training our well-educated nationals in nuclear science and techniques.

Capacity-building is of key importance to the Angolan Government programme. In that regard, we note that through activities organized by the IAEA, our technicians participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, scientific visits, fellowship programmes and other events, while Agency expert missions — in the framework of IAEA projects and programmes — have been actively working in our country.

Africa attaches great importance to the Agency's activities related to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Agency's role as international nuclear watchdog is considered by the Angolan Government to be of paramount importance. Therefore,

my country expects that all NPT States parties will respect the Agency's statutory mandate to verify compliance with the Treaty. The objective of the NPT is to rid the world of the nuclear threat, and that will be possible only if all nuclear weapons are eliminated.

The Republic of Angola has every reason to support the adoption of the report of the IAEA.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on the very efficient and excellent manner in which he is leading the Agency. We would like to emphasize the consistent impartiality with which he carries out his functions.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his informative report to the General Assembly on the main developments in the Agency's activities during 2003. We hope that his tireless efforts to advance the non-proliferation regime will be crowned with success.

The present report of the IAEA, transmitted by document A/59/295, refers to various activities that the Agency has undertaken to fulfil its important and sensitive mandate. As the report indicates, 2003 was a year of notable success for the Agency in its efforts to ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology were shared globally for economic and social development. Indeed, the IAEA is required by its Statute to "seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". That requirement not only entrusts the Agency with a specific responsibility but also underlines the importance of nuclear technology for the advancement of human society.

As a common heritage of humanity, nuclear technology has broad applications, ranging from medicine and agriculture to providing a renewable energy source. The applications of "atoms for health", nuclear techniques and food production and managing the world's scarce resources of fresh water, referred to in the report, are gaining increasing importance as tools for social and economic development. Therefore, the Agency can and should play a central role in the enhancement of technical cooperation among States parties, including by promoting the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries through technology transfer and capacity-building.

A particular area in which nuclear technology has been increasingly seen as essential is related to nuclear power plants. The IAEA, in its resolution GC(43)RES/14 of 1 October 1999, recognized that "many countries consider nuclear power, being a climatically benign source of energy, to be an eligible option under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol". In that context, the IAEA General Conference requested the Director General to pursue efforts to strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation activities aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries by continuing to assist in, inter alia, nuclear energy production for those States that pursue it as a component of their energy mix in the twenty-first century. We welcome the report of the Director General, in which he outlined the Agency's activities in those important areas.

The inalienable right of all States parties to peaceful applications of nuclear technology, without discrimination, constitutes the very foundation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In accordance with article IV of the NPT, States parties undertake to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The implementation of that basic provision requires the adoption of a realistic and balanced approach to the rights and obligations of the States parties to the NPT. Indeed, such a balanced approach would guarantee the longevity of the present legal regime by providing incentives for membership and compliance.

The provisions of the NPT and of the IAEA Statute with regard to the right to nuclear technology, as well as the imperative of technology cooperation and sharing among those who have accepted the obligations of non-proliferation, attest to the wisdom and understanding of the drafters of those two important documents. However, we should not allow the idea to become entrenched that membership in the NPT and in the IAEA safeguards regime in fact constitutes an impediment to peaceful use, while non-membership is rewarded by acquiescence, as in the case of the development of one of the world's largest nuclear-weapon stockpiles, located in the Middle East. If anything, the failure of the only party outside the

NPT in the Middle East to accept the obligations of the Treaty and of the safeguards regime should have resulted in punishment under the most severe restrictions, rather than the reward of impunity.

The inalienable right of States parties to the NPT, enshrined in its article IV, shall not under any circumstances be restricted so long as that right is exercised for peaceful purposes and under the IAEA safeguards system. Accordingly, national efforts to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes with a view to fostering economic development should not be hampered by ulterior external political considerations. No consideration other than the requirements of the Treaty should preclude the fulfilment of the rights and obligations of States parties under the provisions of the Treaty.

Iran, as an original State party to the NPT, is committed to its obligations under the Treaty. At the same time, we are determined to exercise our inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as enshrined in article IV of the Treaty. Iran's decision and determination to pursue nuclear electricity generation is based on well-justified technical and financial grounds. The added value of limited fossil resources, the uses of those resources in other industries, concern over environmental pollution and the need to benefit from various energy options have convinced the Iranian Government to decide to apply nuclear energy to electricity generation, with a total capacity of 7,000 Megawatts by the year 2020. To that end, Iran has invested extensive human and material resources in that field. However, it should be clearly stated that — as has been repeatedly stated — nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran's defence doctrine, not only because of our religious convictions and our obligations under the NPT and other relevant conventions, but also because of a sober strategic calculation.

Yet, illegitimate sanctions have targeted not only Iran's legitimate nuclear programme, but in fact the country's whole industrial sector and all its possible sources of supplies of material and equipment. What Iran has been able to achieve is primarily the result of the intellect and hard work of Iranian scientists. Regrettably, a politically charged atmosphere of concern has been orchestrated about this limited peaceful capability that has little to do with the objectives of non-proliferation. Under such circumstances, a mere clarification of intentions and security doctrine may not suffice to convince all partners.

To remedy the situation, Iran has taken significant steps to further enhance confidence by, in particular, signing and implementing an additional protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement in December 2003, as well as by maintaining a voluntary suspension of its enrichment activities since last November. Iran is also currently engaged in negotiations with France, Germany and the United Kingdom to reach mutual objective assurances on nuclear cooperation, transparency and non-diversion. Those negotiations will bear fruit if mutual understanding, political will and good faith prevail.

We are pleased to note that the recent reports of the Agency provide a clear indication that major and decisive steps have been taken by both IAEA and Iran towards resolving outstanding issues. The present verification activities, which go beyond the safeguards agreement and the additional protocol, represent an important achievement for both Iran and IAEA. It needs to be borne in mind that the lack of identified or known criteria and timelines on the basis of which Iran could organize itself for robust inspections has required Iran to provide information or to grant access, primarily after requests were made by the Agency, but in particular, when a certain State, based on its already proved failed intelligence, occasionally raised concerns over irrelevant sites — concerns that have always proved to be wrong.

However, in the spirit of cooperation and as confirmed by the Agency's report, action has been taken to satisfy the requests of the Agency in the fullest and most speedy manner possible. Over 800 person-days of inspections have been carried out in Iran since February 2003, amounting to one of the most robust and intrusive verifications in the history of the Agency.

On the basis of the recent IAEA report, one can briefly conclude that there has been no evidence of diversion in Iran's nuclear programme; that the Agency is making steady progress in understanding the nature and extent of Iran's nuclear programme; that Iran is acting as if it had ratified the additional protocol and has submitted over 1,030 pages of its initial declaration, pursuant to the additional protocol; that some previously outstanding issues have reached the point where the further follow-up needed will be

carried out as part of routine safeguards implementation; and that, based on the Agency's analysis to date, it appears plausible that the contamination found at various locations in Iran has not been the result of the enrichment of uranium by Iran. Those facts and conclusions provide a clear picture of Iran's nuclear programme and remove the concerns and ambiguities casting a shadow over its peaceful nature.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to emphasize the firm determination of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its cooperation with the Agency, in good faith and with full transparency. In our view, the progress achieved through our cooperation with IAEA will assist the Agency to draw definitive conclusions and to remove this issue from its agenda in the near future.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): My delegation wishes to pay its compliments to Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his continued professionalism and competence in managing the affairs of the Agency during the course of the past year. We also wish to express our gratitude to him and his entire staff for the production of the Agency's annual report for 2003, which is the focus of the deliberations of the General Assembly today.

Developments during the past year proved to be extremely challenging for the Agency. They also tested to the limit the ability of the organization to successfully execute the mandate enshrined in its Statute. It is gratifying to note that, in handling those complex and sensitive situations, the Agency was guided by the principle that it is indeed only through international cooperation and mutual accommodation that progress can be made in dealing with issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security and nuclear non-proliferation.

Ghana is highly appreciative of the support that it has received from the Agency throughout the past year through the Technical Cooperation Programme. Ghana has continued to strengthen its institutional and human resource capabilities in the application of nuclear technologies to problems of health, agriculture, industry and the environment through relevant national and regional projects.

During 2003, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission continued to make more efficient use of the Agency's programmes for nuclear science and technology research, as well as of their applications to the socio-economic development of Ghana. Notable among the research activities carried out was the application of neutron activation analysis. Our research reactor was used for the characterization of major aquifers in the eastern region of Ghana and for geo-chemical studies of granite bodies in southern Ghana. Researchers also undertook tasks involving radioisotope scanning o distillation columns for the nation's oil refinery, and used non-destructive testing techniques to inspect welds in the chemical and mining industries.

Nuclear and biotechnological techniques are being used alongside conventional farming practices to support national agricultural projects aimed at increasing food production through the tissue-culture technique and at increasing biodiversity through the introduction of viable economic varieties obtained from mutation breeding.

For about a decade now, Ghana has been utilizing radiation processing to preserve food and sterilize medical products. Over the years, appropriate manpower has been developed to operate and utilize the cobalt-60 gamma irradiator. We are now seeking venture capital or partnerships with the private sector to replace our old irradiator. We expect that such an arrangement will inject the necessary financial resources to bring about the full commercialization of that technology.

In the peaceful applications of nuclear techniques for Ghana's sustainable development, we shall continue to make efforts to ensure that radioactive sources are safe and secure. Stringent measures are being put in place at the national level to enhance the physical protection of all facilities that house sources of ionizing radiation and nuclear materials against sabotage, theft and illicit trafficking. At the same time and in line with emergency responses to potential nuclear or radiological situations, the Radiation Protection Board and the National Disaster Management Organization have produced a national emergency response plan. The roles and responsibilities of various stakeholder institutions within the country have been identified and prepared for emergency drills and exercises, which are to be conducted in the near future. Ghana shares the concerns of the international community about the need for nuclear safety and security, and recognizes the

importance of the actions taken thus far to address the issue.

As is the case in many countries in Africa and in other tropical areas, malaria is a major source of concern for our people, representing a significant percentage of mortality in Ghana. My delegation welcomes the Agency's efforts and research activities aimed at combating malaria through the application of the sterile insect technique. We look forward to early progress in that valuable project.

My Government would like to place on record its gratitude to IAEA for establishing a second radiotherapy centre in our country. The Agency provided all the equipment, training and expert services. The two radiotherapy facilities are currently being used for the treatment of cancer patients from Ghana and neighbouring countries in the West Africa subregion.

Nuclear security is a precondition for nuclear cooperation and trade. However, it is no secret that there are many countries that lack the necessary expertise to develop and implement a State system of nuclear security. Verification challenges are constantly evolving, and the fact that potential proliferators constantly seek access to new technologies requires that the Agency continuously update its knowledge and detection capabilities. In that regard, my delegation appeals to both IAEA and to member States that possess the requisite capabilities to assist developing countries, in particular to close the security gap. At the same time, it is imperative that solutions be found for the management and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.

The regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been, and continues to be, a key element in the maintenance of international peace and security. The NPT is the cornerstone of the international community's efforts to secure complete nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is Ghana's opinion that all nations must cooperate fully to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the Treaty. Ghana, for its part, attaches great importance to the reduction of military expenditures, in accordance with the principles of undiminished security. We therefore urge all States to transfer any peace dividends resulting from reductions in military spending to economic and social development activities.

I would like to conclude by once again acknowledging that IAEA has been one of Ghana's most reliable development partners since our country joined the Agency, in 1960. Our second country programme framework, which constitutes the framework for medium-term technical cooperation between IAEA and Ghana, was signed a few months ago. That document outlines mutually agreed strategies for matching nuclear technology to national development priorities. Ghana's cooperation with IAEA will focus on critical aspects of human health, water resources development, crop production, livestock development and the development of human resources for the application and development of nuclear technology and biotechnology in Ghana. I wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm the Government of Ghana's unwavering support for the Agency as it strives to realize its statutory objectives of promoting the safe and peaceful applications of nuclear technology for socio-economic development throughout the world.

Programme of work

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform members that, at the request of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and as reflected in the *Journal*, the consideration of agenda item 48, "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion", originally scheduled for today, Monday, 1 November 2004, has been postponed to a later date.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform members that, at 2.30 p.m. today, we will continue our debate on agenda item 14, in order that the General Assembly may take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.18.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.48

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

48th plenary meeting
Monday, 1 November 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 2.45 p.m.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/59/295)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.18)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded debate on this item this morning.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/59/L.18. Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am going to make a statement on behalf of my delegation on our position on the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and is not a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Democratic People's Republic of Korea broke away from IAEA in the early 1990s because the Agency had abandoned the principle of equity, reducing itself to a political tool of the super-Powers; and last year the Democratic People's Republic of Korea withdrew from the NPT in order to defend the supreme interests of the nation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no relations with either IAEA or NPT, and it is irrelevant for IAEA to report on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its annual report.

Second, the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency" is aimed at misleading the public regarding the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula in order to exert pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The IAEA is crying that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing its non-compliance with the safeguards agreement. Japan is claiming that the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat to peace and security in Northeast Asia, while the United States nuclear weapons deployed on the Japanese islands and targeted at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea serve peace and security. In addition, certain other countries are

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saying that the withdrawal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the NPT and its nuclear programme are challenges to the non-proliferation regime.

However, all those arguments are based on the reversed logic of putting the cart before the horse, intentionally turning away from the intrinsic nature of the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula. The nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula is the direct outcome of the hostile United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a political and military question to be settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America. If the United States had not brought nuclear weapons onto the Korean Peninsula, and if the United States had not threatened a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the nuclear issue and the withdrawal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from NPT would not have cropped up.

From the Agency's approach to the recently exposed secret nuclear experiment of South Korea, we have become even more aware of the injustice and double standards of the IAEA and of certain other countries that feign concern over the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula. How can we count on them regarding questions of the supreme interests of the State? My delegation thinks that if IAEA and certain member countries really care about resolving the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, they should shake off their prejudice, look at the question squarely, and urge the United States to give up its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As for the uranium enrichment programme, which is mentioned in the report, it is a fabrication of the United States created in order to lay the blame for the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula at the feet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The allegation that a secret uranium enrichment programme exists, like the pre-emptive strike strategy, is characteristic of the United States in its self-righteousness, unilateralism and bellicosity. Figuratively speaking, the former is based on the logic that if you repeat lies, they will become truth, while the latter is based on the assumption that if the pedestrian across the street looks like he is going to strike you, you strike him. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is maintaining a high level of vigilance against that kind of mentality and manoeuvring of the United States.

The United States aggression towards Iraq teaches us a grave lesson. The United Nations inspection team, lead by the IAEA, searched the whole territory of Iraq for nearly 10 years, including the presidential palaces, but did not give any confirmation that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. The United States, clinging to that, invented the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and thus justified its war of aggression against Iraq.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already made it clear that, if the United States renounces, in a practical manner, its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the nuclear threat, it is willing to scrap its nuclear deterrence accordingly. It is the consistent position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to hold fast to the ultimate goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to settle the nuclear issue peacefully through talks and negotiations.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, based on this point of view, will vote against the draft resolution, because it is not intended to contribute to resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

The Acting President: As you know, we have already heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/59/L.18. Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I would like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/59/L.18: the Philippines and Nicaragua.

A recorded vote has been requested. We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Draft resolution A/59/L.18 was adopted by 123 votes to 1 (resolution 59/18).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Cape Verde, Eritrea, Georgia, Mauritius, Tajikistan and Viet Nam informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Several representatives have requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): Japan would like to exercise the right of reply to the statement in explanation of vote made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In his explanation, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said that the United States nuclear weapons were targeted at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is totally untrue. As the only nation that has suffered the scourge of the atomic bomb, Japan is fully committed to the renunciation of the option of possessing nuclear weapons under relevant international treaties, including, inter alia, the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and has consistently maintained its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing nuclear weapons, not manufacturing them and not allowing them to enter Japan.

Mr. Chun (Republic of Korea): I would also like to exercise the right of reply to the statement of the representative of North Korea. My delegation rejects the North Korean representative's characterization of the nuclear experiments conducted by some scientists in my country. As we have made clear on a number of occasions, including during the general debate of the General Assembly in our Foreign Minister's statement, those experiments were isolated laboratory-scale research activities that a few scientists conducted on their own for purely scientific purposes. They have nothing whatsoever to do with a weapons programme.

Furthermore, even though the Republic of Korea maintains the sixth largest civil nuclear industry in the world and depends on nuclear energy for 40 per cent of its supply of electricity, we do not have any enrichment or reprocessing facilities. We do not have any clandestine nuclear programmes as the North Korean delegate has alleged.

Despite the compelling economic imperative to reduce our dependence on imported nuclear fuel, we maintain the policy of voluntarily abstaining from the possession of enrichment or reprocessing facilities solely in the interests of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Scientific research for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a fundamental right that all parties to the NPT are guaranteed under article IV of the treaty.

Although the experiments previously referred to should have been conducted with the proper authorization of my Government and been reported to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a timely manner, the amount of nuclear material involved is too trivial to have any relevance to proliferation. Moreover, the disclosure of those research activities resulted from my Government's political determination to accept the new safeguards standards set forth in the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement, under which we declare all our past nuclear activities down to the level of scientific experiments involving milligram units, and we thus have rectified any inadvertent reporting lapses. Therefore, there should be no doubt left whatsoever regarding my Government's firm commitment to nuclear non-

proliferation norms, and we are providing full cooperation with the IAEA to rectify any past reporting lapses.

Finally, if North Korea does exactly as we have done, and accepts the highest standards of nuclear transparency, much of the international concern about North Korea's nuclear programme will be resolved.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First, I am going to reply to the Japanese representative. The Japanese representative, and Japan generally speaking, tries very hard to cover up its ulterior motives with its three principles or by referring to Japan's sacrifices from that nuclear bomb attack. Actually, Japan, while approving the three principles, allows nuclear weapons of the United States to come and go through Japanese ports. Also, on the Japanese islands there are many United States military bases that are targeted against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Japanese representative cannot cover up all that reality.

Second, as for the South Koreans, I told the truth. The South Koreans have done this secret experiment and we know that they have tried to develop nuclear weapons since the 1970s. And this experiment, which was recently disclosed, was done in the 1980s. How can we trust their commitment to the international community?

Mr. Chun (Republic of Korea): I do not want to enter into a prolonged debate on nuclear issues or the allegations raised by the North Korean delegate in this forum. However, my delegation wishes to make the point that we find it absurd that the most egregious and determined proliferator known to the world is abusing this session to present a grossly distorted and exaggerated allegation about my country's nuclear research activities, which have, as I said earlier, no relevance to proliferation at all. What North Korea has to do first is dismantle its nuclear weapons programme entirely and accept the highest safeguard standards set forth by the additional protocol before it can consider itself qualified to criticize other countries' peaceful nuclear research activities.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Our nuclear programme is already well known to the world. So, we are now trying to solve this with the United States. This has come up because of the United States hostile policy of nuclear threat. As for the South Korean nuclear programme, it had not been known until recently. I think it is very dangerous since they are boasting of having the sixth largest developed nuclear facilities. To this day it is not known how dangerous it is. Ours is known. South Korea's is unknown.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): Japan will not repeat our point because our message is very clear and is understood by 99 per cent of the membership of the United Nations.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 14?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 26

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/307)

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

We are discussing today the ninth and final report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Guatemalan peace agreements. In addition to summarizing political developments during the past year, the report seeks to assess the overall progress in consolidating the peace. The evaluation comes at a critical juncture for Guatemala. The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) will close after 10 years, during which its presence has been essential to the implementation of the accords. The departure of MINUGUA will thus mark the beginning of a new and necessary phase of the peace process. It will now be completely up to national actors to assume responsibility for the unequivocal implementation of the peace accords and to ensure adequate funding.

Over the past two years, MINUGUA has already phased down its operations and carried out a transition strategy designed to build national capacity. The efforts

were not only directed at key State institutions, such as the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, but also at civil society organizations likely to remain engaged in peacebuilding efforts in the future.

The strategy also sought to guarantee adequate follow-up for priorities relating to the peace accords by the United Nations system in Guatemala. In that light, the European Union would be in favour of a further United Nations presence to strengthen the Government in its efforts to improve the human rights situation. In this respect, the establishment of an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would make an important contribution. Impunity and threats to human rights activists by clandestine and illegal groups also need special attention.

As is stipulated in the report, MINUGUA used the final period to reinforce the peace agenda with the new authorities, which took office in January 2004. The Mission produced a comprehensive set of policy recommendations and reviewed them with senior Government officials, governors, mayors, legislators, justice officials and leaders of civil society. During his visit to Guatemala in May 2004, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Sir Kieran Prendergast, underscored to those actors that the peace accords should remain Guatemala's basic blueprint for development. The European Union would like to add its voice to that message.

Meanwhile, continued support by the donor community is important. The contributions made over the years by the Group of Friends to the Peace Process and by the members of the Dialogue Group have been invaluable. While expressing gratitude for those contributions and for the support for MINUGUA over the years, the European Union hopes that we will all remain engaged with peace accords-related projects and remain in a close political dialogue with the Guatemalan Government.

Ms. García Guerra (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the very comprehensive and detailed report on the implementation of the peace agreements in Guatemala and the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

My delegation looks forward with the same interest to the additional report that the Secretary-General will be presenting in the months ahead, pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 58/238. That report will mark the closing of the Mission after 10 years in operation. It will surely also serve as a report on lessons learned.

As a neighbour and a friend of Guatemala, a country that has participated in a variety of good offices and reconciliation efforts in the Central American region and a member of the Group of Friends to the Peace Process in Guatemala, Mexico has been closely following the work that MINUGUA has been doing over its 10 years of existence. As long as the people, the Government and the political forces of that country felt that the Mission's presence was useful and necessary, Mexico supported the renewal of the Mission's mandate.

As the Secretary-General's report well points out,

> "Through its verification, good offices, technical cooperation and public information, MINUGUA has made countless contributions, helping over the years to remind Guatemalans of the commitments they have made and to keep the country on the path of peace." (*A/59/307, para. 69*)

However, MINUGUA had to come to an end and yield to a phase in which national stakeholders would become the main actors responsible for overseeing and ensuring compliance with the peace accords. In this new phase, Guatemala will continue to enjoy the support of the United Nations and our support as a member of the international community.

During this transition period, the symbolic relaunching of the peace accords, which President Oscar Berger undertook when he took office less than a year ago, is of great significance. With the help of MINUGUA, over the last 10 years the Government and the society of Guatemala have made many major advances. Among other things, an end was put to more than three decades of armed conflict and human rights violations perpetrated or supported by the State. The reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life was completed. The military was dramatically reduced in size, as was the military budget. The Presidential General Staff was dismantled. In general, civilian control over the armed forces has been strengthened. Notable progress has been made in promoting and protecting human rights. Important legislative reforms in the area of elections and political parties have been adopted, in addition to laws for decentralization and laws against discrimination. Today, Guatemala has a

democratic system and a mature civil society that is ever vigilant about compliance with the peace agreements.

However, in his report, the Secretary-General also underscores that some of the commitments of the Government and Guatemalan society as a whole are still outstanding. We believe that those commitments must be fulfilled for the country to achieve sustainable peace based on a democratic and fair society. Those commitments include compensation for victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the State during the armed conflict, strengthening of the rule of law, greater progress in the recognition and respect of the rights of indigenous peoples and their participation in society and greater progress on tax reform, which has become a matter of urgency.

Some of those challenges are similar to those faced by other countries in Central America, including my own. For that reason and because of the geographical, historical and cultural ties that Mexico shares with Guatemala, there is enormous potential for cooperation between the Governments of our two countries in the post-MINUGUA phase that is about to begin, aside from the cooperation that already exists at the regional level.

For example, one priority of the Government of President Berger is to work for Guatemala's full adherence to all instruments of international human rights law and, more specifically, to promote the establishment in Guatemala of a local office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. That issue is being debated in the Congress. We are also aware that the United Nations would consider such an office to be a fundamental instrument for continuing the job of verification on human rights — which to date has been done by MINUGUA — and for supporting national human rights institutions. Mexico has an office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in its own territory, and we are most willing to share with the Government of Guatemala our experience with that office.

My delegation intends to submit to the Assembly a draft resolution on the occasion of the conclusion of MINUGUA's mandate and the beginning of a new phase in the peace process. We trust that this initiative will gain the support of the Group of Friends and other Member States, which, for years now, have supported this process.

Finally, I thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guatemala for the job he has done in the final phase of the transition and the conclusion of the Mission. I also pay tribute to the entire staff of the Mission and the young people of Guatemala who were involved in the National Transition Volunteers Programme for their commitment to the peace process in Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we thank the Secretary-General for his ninth and final report on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, contained in document A/59/307. We reaffirm our gratitude to the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan peace process, which has supported us throughout the long process, monitoring the situation in Central America in general and that in Guatemala in particular. We especially thank the Government of Mexico, which, year after year, has facilitated the preparation of the draft resolution on this topic.

For many years now, at this time of the year, we have taken up the agenda item on the situation in Central America, including, of course, the situation in Guatemala. As is well known, the United Nations Verification Mission has operated in our country since 1994. Its original purpose was to verify implementation of a human rights agreement, but its mandate was expanded in December 1996 to assist the parties that signed the peace agreements by carrying out tasks of verification, facilitation, public information and good offices.

Those peace accords continue to be a work in progress, bringing great advances and seeing some setbacks. We believe that this is not the moment to apportion responsibility for the overall situation we face. Certainly, we agree with the report's view that in Guatemala the foundations for a promising future have been laid and that a democratic framework has been consolidated.

That was attested to by the general elections that took place in November and December of last year and gave clear proof of being an open, transparent and legitimate process. That is a considerable improvement in the political situation of Guatemala. Those elections enabled a peaceful and orderly transition to the coalition Government headed by President Oscar

Berger Perdomo, which is fully committed to implementing the peace agreements. The peace agreements are a substantial part of the agenda of our Government, along with solving the problem of the deeply felt needs of the population, which include the strengthening and the institutionalization of civil society. For that reason, in September 2004, President Berger stated,

> "My plan of government incorporates the peace agreements and defines their implementation as the commitment of the whole nation. As President of Guatemala, I endorse the principle that solid and lasting peace must be founded on participatory, social and economic development aimed at achieving the common good and responding to the needs of all our people, particularly those still living in situations of extreme poverty."

It is in this context that today we wish to thank all the Member States that made possible the extension of MINUGUA to 31 December of this year. As we said last year, this has allowed us to capitalize on the considerable investment in effort and resources made by the United Nations in supporting all Guatemalans in consolidating the peace process, democracy and sustainable development.

In Guatemala, despite the weakness of certain State institutions, we have made substantial progress in promoting the observance of human rights and building a more inclusive and tolerant society. Still, we are aware that, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, there are still daunting challenges ahead, which is why the Government of President Berger is committed to strengthening the national institutions that are preparing fully to take over the functions the Mission carried out and are reinforcing the national civil police and the national prison system.

It is in this spirit that we support an upgrading of the in-country office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the link established with the United Nations for the purpose of combating organized crime by means of a commission to investigate illegal groups and clandestine security organizations in Guatemala. We are certain that the international community, particularly the countries that are members of the Group of Friends, will go on lending us their support for the work aimed at strengthening the institutions that promote the rule of law.

In conclusion, we wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, his team and the entire staff that was part of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, which after 10 years of fruitful work, is seeing the end of its mandate, leaving behind a significant legacy in our country — a shining example of the kind of success that can be achieved through international cooperation in the interests of peace.

Mr. Dajer (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for having submitted his report in document A/59/307 of 30 August 2004 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

This December, after 10 years of operation, MINUGUA is programmed to be closed down. This marks the end of the verification phase in the work of the United Nations and the beginning of a new phase in the process, whereby all Guatemalans will be doing the work themselves. We are certain that Guatemala is ready to meet that challenge. I should like to stress that there is still a lot to be done and problems still to be dealt with. But, the situation today is far different from what it was in previous years.

A little while ago, Guatemala had democratic elections and it mastered the challenges of the past in a mature manner. During the months that followed the change of Government, as the Secretary-General's report shows, Guatemala showed that it could continue the work that MINUGUA had begun. We agree with the Secretary-General that the support of the community of donors, which is crucial for the immediate future, must continue. Colombia, as a friend of the peace process in Guatemala, welcomes the ushering in of a new phase in the reconciliation and peace process and in the consolidation of Guatemala's democratic institutions. We fully trust in the capability of national, regional and local authorities to continue the process begun by MINUGUA. We stress the need for continued international community support to be forthcoming in order to ensure the success of that process. This firm commitment to Guatemala is particularly important in fighting the crime and insecurity that Guatemala's democracy and economy must deal with.

Mr. Rock (Canada): I welcome this opportunity to take part this afternoon in this discussion as we mark the end of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). The Mission has been an excellent example of the important contribution that international peacekeeping missions can make in the consolidation of peace in a country that has been affected by conflict. The Mission played an important role in the strengthening of human rights in Guatemala and Canada is proud to have supported MINUGUA over the course of its mandate — both in terms of finances and through the participation of Canadian police and military personnel. Canada views MINUGUA's departure as a positive signal of the progress made in Guatemala since the signing of the 1996 peace accords.

There is no question that Guatemala today is a very different country. We believe that significant progress has been made in strengthening democracy and in addressing social inequities. Canada is particularly pleased with the strong direction given by the Berger Administration for renewed commitment with regard to the implementation of the peace accords, as well as the steps taken to acknowledge past wrongs and to promote reconciliation. We must, however, also recognize that significant challenges remain to be overcome in the effort to ensure full respect for human rights and equity and to improve security and access to justice for all Guatemalans.

(*spoke in French*)

In this context, Canada welcomes the Government's continued commitment to the establishment of a commission to investigate illegal armed groups. The creation of that commission is important and necessary not only for the safety and security of Guatemalan citizens, but also for the success of democratic institutions in the country. All Guatemalans should work together not just to establish this commission, but also to give it a strong mandate and operational capacity, which the country needs in order to create a corruption-free culture that can support democratic development.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada also encourages the Guatemalan Government to work with the United Nations on the early establishment of an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala. Such an office would constitute an important step in consolidating the significant advances in human rights that have already been made.

In closing, let me use this occasion to reaffirm Canada's sincere commitment to working in partnership with our friends and our neighbours in the Americas in pursuit of a better future for all the nations of the hemisphere.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Even though many years have past since the armed conflicts in Central America ended, the region is still facing a number of major challenges: the eradication of poverty, the consolidation of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights. Good governance, sustainable economic development and strengthening of the judicial systems continue to be key issues.

However, it is encouraging to see that the Governments of Central America are continuing, and even stepping up, their fight against corruption. Peaceful and transparent elections are now the rule rather than the exception in Central America and bear witness to the gradual consolidation of democracy in those countries. We commend the United Nations agencies and the Organization of American States (OAS) on their long-standing support for the election processes, to which Norway has also contributed, particularly in Guatemala, through the OAS. With the withdrawal of MINUGUA in December, the United Nations is closing the book on one of its most successful peacebuilding missions after 10 years in the field. We would like to commend both the Mission and the United Nations on that outstanding contribution to peace and development in Guatemala.

We are confident that the country is now in a good position to consolidate the peace process by implementing the peace accords. We would like to commend the President of Guatemala on his strong commitment to the peace accords and for the progress which his Government has made in such important areas as completing the reduction of the armed forces. We have no doubt that the peace accords will continue to serve as a road map and a national agenda for further development. However, new commitments and objectives are now on the national agenda, such as the Millennium Development Goals. We hope that the consultative group meeting, scheduled for the first half of next year, will look into those matters.

Although the final withdrawal of MINUGUA is a positive sign, there is a great need for the international

community to continue supporting the implementation of the peace accords. Guatemala is still a developing country in a post-conflict situation. It is important that there be adequate mechanisms in place for following this up after December of this year, particularly in the realm of justice and human rights. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that, in addition to the strengthening of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, the establishment of an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is particularly important in connection with the departure of MINUGUA. Norway will continue its support for the strengthening of the justice sector, the national civilian police and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman.

The Acting President: We have thus heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has concluded this stage of its consideration of item 26.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.